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The International Playing-Card Society was established in 1972 to stimulate interest in all aspects of playing-cards and their associated games. Membership is open to all and the benefits of membership include: Four issues of *The Playing-Card* (TPC) per year together with any other publications (Pattern Sheets, Papers) published by the I.P.C.S.

The membership year runs from 1st July to 30th June of the following year.

Members joining the IPCS part way through the year will receive the back issues of *The Playing-Card* for that year together with any other publications from that year.

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The Editor welcomes the receipt of articles, reviews, queries, opinions and any other material intended for publication at the above address at any time.

LAYOUT DESIGN:
Elletra Deganello

FRONT COVER
Trump XX "Le jugement" from a tarot pack by Antoine Cezar (see article on p. 50).

BACK COVER
Lattmann advertising poster for "Vaterländische Spielkarten 1915" (Patriotic Playing Cards).

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Editorial

I hope that you are well in these pandemia times - or at least as well as can be. When preparing this journal I became aware that the pandemia does not really affect the editor's job: What I need is a computer with text and image processing software and an email client, sometimes a scanner. But besides of that I am missing many direct social contacts, and I guess you will, too.

Recently I got positive feedback on the work I am doing as the editor, you can read it in the Chairman's column on the next page. This is fine, but my work wouldn't be possible without those of you that contribute articles and reviews, and I wonder whether the authors are getting the feedback they deserve. I have noticed that it is a rare event that I hear or read that there was a reaction to some article, be it

positive or critical. My impression is that some of the articles might well raise a discussion. Perhaps that is something happening directly between readers and authors. But possibly others might also be interested, especially in critical or controversial aspects. So I want to encourage you to send your comments also to me for publication. "Notes & Queries" might be a good place for that, if it is not too long. And longer comments could well be published as an article.

In my opinion, *The Playing-Card* should not only be a forum to publish "ultimate wisdom", but also theories (if they are not too far-fetched). I myself like very much the articles that leave some questions open.

Peter Endebrock
(editor@i-p-c-s.org)

New Members

Below are the names and countries of new members in order of their joining.

George Witty - UK
Paolo Cecco - Netherlands
Jan Kappers - Netherlands
Ivan Gerace - Italy
Russell Moore - UK
Zachary Smith - USA
V.P.M. Christiani - Netherlands
Ruggero Collenghi - Italy

Welcome!

Their details are in the members' area of our website, accessible only to other members. Members may have chosen to protect some or all of their contact information.



Please follow the IPCS on Twitter - @I_P_C_S

From the Chairman

A call for monographs

The last IPCS monograph issued to members was Wolfgang Altfahrt's *Makers of Playing-Cards in Prague (Bohemia) – From the 16th Century to 1918*, which was published in September 2016. It's high time that we issued another. However, our editor does not have any specific items ready for publication in the form of a monograph at the moment. **So, if you have an area of research on any playing-card related subject that you would like to write about and that you feel would be more suitable for publication as a book rather than as a series of articles, please contact the editor (editor@i-p-c-s.org) with details.** Monographs on new topics are welcome, as are monographs that expand on articles previously published in *The Playing-card* and elsewhere or that expand on papers previously presented at annual conventions. Previous monographs have been published in French, German, Italian and English, so language needn't act as a bar to publication. As to length, anything from 50 to 150 pages or so is generally acceptable, though anything longer could be considered. And illustrations, of course, would be a bonus.

A special thanks

The IPCS is reliant for its continued existence on the efforts of volunteers from within its membership who are prepared to devote their time and energy to its various activities. They do this in a number of ways.

There are those members who share their knowledge and the results of their research with their fellow enthusiasts by writing articles for publication in *The Playing-card* and papers for presentation at annual conventions and local meetings. The success of these events is dependent not only on the considerable efforts of the organisers of them. It is also owing to the presence of those members who are fortunate enough to be able to attend these gatherings in order to listen to the talks and take part in the follow-on Q&A sessions and to participate in the games and trading sessions and the auctions of members' lots. Support of this sort is provided on an occasional basis. Support of a more consistent and regular nature is provided by the Society's Officers and the Members of its Council, by the

Area Representatives, by the Membership Officer and by the Distribution Officer. The efforts of all these individuals to the smooth running of the Society are worthy of mention and deserving of our thanks. However, I should like to take this opportunity to highlight the contribution of one person in particular.

For many members, particularly those unable to attend Annual Conventions or local meetings, *The Playing-card* is their principal contact with the Society and, along with the online availability of 46 years of back issues, is the most important benefit of membership. If the Society has any claim to being a leading authority in the field of playing-card research, it is surely owing to the quality and wide range of the articles published in *The Playing-card*. Consistently maintaining a high quality of scholarship within its pages helps promote *The Playing-card* as the best journal for playing-card enthusiasts to publish their research in and is vital if the Society is to continue to flourish and continue to be relevant.

The Playing-card exists entirely through the contributions of its readers, who submit scholastic studies, reviews and letters for publication to the editor. The job of editor of a journal like *The Playing-card* is a most important one and involves more than the mere checking of facts, spelling, grammar, and punctuation. It requires the expertise and knowledge to be able to judge the quality of the research on which a submitted article is based and whether the article adds to existing knowledge. Throughout his 14 years as editor of *The Playing-card* **Peter Endebrock** has brought to the job a considerable erudition based on many years of study and a wide knowledge of the history of playing-cards, coupled with the skills required to produce a colourful journal that is pleasing to the eye and presents its contributors' research in the most striking and effective way. I feel we all owe him an enormous debt of gratitude for the time he willingly spares for his editorial responsibilities and I am sure you will all wish to join me in wishing him a big thank you for all his efforts on our behalf. Long may they continue.

John Williamson
(chairman@i-p-c-s.org)



You can find us on Facebook: [ipcs.org](https://www.facebook.com/ipcs.org)

Giuliano Crippa 1947 - 2020

When in late August during one of our phone calls Giuliano announced that he had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer that also affected the liver, there was a long moment of silence, we both knew what it meant. I was prepared to be told that there was a health problem. Giuliano had been complaining for some time of constant fatigue and a lack of appetite, which was unusual for him. But what I heard was something completely different and completely unexpected, in a moment I saw all the moments of friendship and life we had spent together and that would never be repeated. I desperately searched for words that could give him a minimum of comfort but I did not find them and I simply said to him: each case of cancer plays out differently.

Giuliano at the time of that phone call was already aware of everything, he knew that he was going to die painfully. I ended the call by saying that I didn't want to regret not telling him what I thought and not thanking him for all he had been able to give and teach me in all our years of friendship. I don't remember the exact words, but they weren't extraordinary or special, I'm not a poet. However, I think they meant a lot to him because he thanked me and said, "Goodbye, you're a true friend." We haven't talked about it any more, just as we haven't talked about gastronomy, which had been one of our favourite topics, with the exchange of information, on recipes, restaurants and various local specialities. I talked to him about cards, and mentioned my intention to write an article on minchiato and as usual he gave me some good suggestions on how to write it.

The last phone call was on Friday evening, when with a breathless voice Giuliano replied that he had been hospitalized and that he would start therapy on Monday. To cheer him up a little, I mentioned that the new Cartorama catalogue had just come out and that there was a nice deck of Gumpfenberg (his passion) for sale. It was a deck he didn't own and had been looking for a long time. I told him I would let him know if I could get a price reduction. After an hour he sent me a whatsapp message asking me if I could send him the images of the deck. I sent them to him, and I hope he had a chance to appreciate them. The next day he passed away.

Giuliano Crippa was one of the greatest collectors of playing cards, with a preference for the cardmakers of his home city Milan, and in particular for Gumpfenberg. His collection was not limited to decks of cards, but also included original documents, curious objects relating to the secondary use of playing cards, path games and popular prints. His home reflects his great passion; every possible space displaying a deck of cards, a print, a sheet or some other card memorabilia. His sweet wife Patrizia always supported him.

Giuliano was my master, it was he who, years ago, when I took an interest in playing cards again, explained to me with enormous passion the difference between being a real collector and being just a simple hoarder.

Giuliano was a mentor, not only for me but for all Italian collectors. He always encouraged newbies to study and research, complaining about the lack of serious texts on Italian playing card history.

Giuliano was the representative for Italy for the IPCS; it was he who organized the annual meetings of the Italian members, dedicating as much attention to the museums and archives to visit as to the restaurants where we should hold our social dinners. On his suggestion we went to Siena, Pavia, Palermo, Brescia, Turin, Valle d'Aosta, and many other places.

Giuliano was an enthusiast who until the end hid his diagnosis from others and continued to make stimulating interventions on the 7Bello Facebook site and to respond to the interventions of other members. When unable to reach his "office" because it was too hard to climb the two flights of stairs, he searched the house and posted on the site the curiosity of an ace of minchiato with three tax stamps to stimulate our interest.

Giuliano was above all a friend; a friend for all those who knew him, for all those who turned to him for advice or suggestions, for all those who shared his passion for the world of playing cards.

Giuliano, I will miss our phone calls at seven in the evening, when we talked about a little bit of everything, I will miss our meetings in which the latest purchases were shown and discussed. I will miss the lunches and dinners, in which you submitted good-humouredly to me and Nicola making fun of you. I will miss travelling with you to the conventions. I will miss your advice, and your answers to all my questions and those I did not have time to ask.

Above all, like everyone who knew you, I will miss your friendship. Our only regret is that the time was far too short.

Gianni Monzali



Quando verso fine agosto durante una delle nostre telefonate Giuliano mi ha annunciato che gli era stato diagnosticato un tumore al pancreas che interessava anche il fegato, c'è stato un lungo momento di silenzio, tutti e due avevamo ben presente cosa significasse. Ero preparato a sentirmi dire che c'era un problemino di salute. Giuliano era da qualche tempo che si lamentava di una continua stanchezza e di una mancanza d'appetito cosa insolita per lui. Ma quanto sentito era qualcosa di completamente diverso e del tutto inaspettato, in un attimo ho rivisto tutti i momenti di amicizia e di vita che avevamo passato insieme e che non si sarebbero più ripetuti. Ho cercato disperatamente delle parole che potessero dargli un minimo di conforto ma non le ho trovate e gli ho semplicemente detto: sì è vero, ma non è detto, ogni caso è diverso. Giuliano al momento di quella telefonata era già al corrente di tutto, sapeva che era destinato a morire soffrendo molto. Ho chiuso la telefonata dicendogli, che non volevo aver il rimpianto di non avergli detto quello che pensavo e di non averlo ringraziato per tutto quello che aveva saputo darmi ed insegnarmi in tutti questi anni di amicizia. Non ricordo le esatte parole, ma non erano né straordinarie né speciali, non sono un poeta. Penso comunque che gli abbiano fatto piacere perché mi ha ringraziato e salutato dicendomi: sei un vero amico. Non ne abbiamo più parlato, come non abbiamo più parlato di gastronomia, che era stato invece in passato uno dei nostri argomenti preferiti con scambio di informazioni, su ricette, ristoranti ed i vari prodotti gastronomici. Gli parlavo spesso di carte, gli avevo anche accennato la mia intenzione di scrivere un articolo sulle minchiate e ne discutevamo. L'ultima telefonata è stata venerdì sera, con voce affannata mi ha risposto che era stato ricoverato e che lunedì avrebbe iniziato la terapia. Per tirargli un pò su il morale gli accennai che era appena uscito il nuovo catalogo di Cartorama e che c'era un bel mazzo del Gumpfenberg (la sua passione) in vendita. Era un mazzo che non possedeva e che stava cercando da tempo, gli dissi che gli avrei fatto sapere se riuscivo ad ottenere una riduzione di prezzo. Dopo un'ora mi mandò un messaggio con whatsapp chiedendomi se potevo inviargli le immagini del mazzo. Gliel'ho mandate, spero che le abbia viste e gli siano piaciute. Il giorno dopo ci aveva lasciato.

Giuliano Crippa è stato uno dei più grandi collezionisti di carte da gioco, con una predilezione per gli stampatori della sua Milano ed in particolare per il Gumpfenberg. La sua collezione non si limitava ai mazzi di carte, ma comprendeva anche documenti originali, curiosi oggetti inerenti l'uso secondario delle carte da gioco, i giochi di percorso e tanto altro riguardante le stampe popolari.

La sua casa era l'immagine di questa sua grande passione, ovunque si poteva ammirare un mazzo, una stampa, un foglio o qualche memorabilia, con la benevola tolleranza della sua amata Patrizia.

Giuliano è stato il mio maestro, è stato lui che quando, anni fa, ho ripreso ad interessarmi alle carte da gioco, mi ha spiegato con un'enorme passione la differenza tra essere un collezionista ed essere un semplice raccoglitore di carte da gioco.

Giuliano è stato un maestro, non solo per me, ma per tutti i collezionisti italiani, ha sempre cercato di appassionare i neofiti allo studio ed alla ricerca, lamentando la mancanza di testi seri sulle carte da gioco italiane e la loro storia.

Giuliano è stato il rappresentante per l'Italia dell'IPCS, è stato lui che ha organizzato gli incontri annuali dei soci italiani, dedicando tanta attenzione ai musei ed archivi da visitare, quanta ai ristoranti dove tenere la nostra cena sociale, siamo andati così a Siena, Pavia, Palermo, Brescia, Torino, Valle d'Aosta e tanti altri posti.

Giuliano è stato un appassionato che fino all'ultimo ha nascosto agli altri la sua situazione ed ha continuato a fare interventi stimolanti sul sito Facebook del 7Bello ed a rispondere agli interventi degli altri soci, e quando non riuscendo più a raggiungere il suo "ufficio" perché faceva troppa fatica a fare le due rampe di scale, ha cercato in casa ed ha postato sul sito la curiosità di un asso delle minchiate con tre timbri fiscali per stimolare la nostra curiosità.

Giuliano è stato soprattutto un amico, un amico per tutti quelli che lo hanno conosciuto, per tutti quelli che si sono rivolti a lui per consigli o suggerimenti, per tutti quelli che hanno condiviso la sua passione per il mondo delle carte da gioco.

Giuliano, mi mancheranno le nostre telefonate alle sette di sera, quando si parlava di un pò di tutto, mi mancheranno i nostri incontri in cui si mostravano e discutevano gli ultimi acquisti, mi mancheranno i pranzi e le cene, in cui sottostavi con ironia alle prese giro da parte mia e di Nicola, mi mancheranno i viaggi per le convention, mi mancheranno i tuoi consigli, le tue risposte a tutte le mie domande e ce ne sono ancora tante che non ho avuto il tempo di fare.

Mi mancherà soprattutto la tua amicizia come mancherà a tutti quelli che ti hanno conosciuto, con l'unico rimpianto che sia stata così breve. Tutti noi avremmo voluto che fosse durata ancora a lungo.

Gianni Monzali

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New Books

Spielkarten aus der Sammlung des Museums Bautzen.

By Peter Endebrock and Sigmar Radau.

Studien zur Spielkarte Nr. 43.

Berlin 2020.

A4, 199 pages.

A catalogue of the playing-cards in the Museum Bautzen (Budissin). Additionally there is information about the cardmaker Benjamin Wilhelm Oeser who worked in Bautzen from 1835 to 1845, followed by his widow until 1848. A pack in the Cary collection produced by Oeser is also described.

The price is 20 Euro + p&p, the book can be ordered from Sigmar Radau (sigmar@sr-archiv24.de).



Peter Endebrock - Sigmar Radau

Spielkarten aus der Sammlung des Museums Bautzen

Studien zur Spielkarte Nr. 43

Das Internationale (Doppel-)Bild, Der Entwurf einer Ordnung.

By Jürgen Platz.

Studien zur Spielkarte Nr. 44.

Berlin 2020.

A4, 239 pages.

A proposal for a classification of packs with the (double-headed) International pattern, together with a catalogue of German cards with that pattern. Packs by more than 20 makers from before 1945 and by 15 makers from after WWII with a lot of variants are described.

The price is 20 Euro + p&p, the book can be ordered from Sigmar Radau (sigmar@sr-archiv24.de).

Jürgen Platz

Das Internationale (Doppel-)Bild Der Entwurf einer Ordnung



Studien zur Spielkarte 44

Between Germany and France: Cardmakers in Landau and Kehl

Written by Thierry Depaulis

Cardmakers in Kehl, Part One

A few years ago an antique dealer in Versailles was offering for sale a tarot pack by one Antoine Cezar from Kehl (Germany).¹ It had never been seen before. The two of Cups reads:

TAROS·FIN·DE
ANTOINE CEZAR·
MAISTRE·CARTIER
AV·FOR·DE·KEHL

(Fine tarot cards by Antoine Cezar² master cardmaker in the Fort of Kehl)

Figs. 1 - 6 show cards from this tarot pack by Antoine Cezar (or Cesar), "maistre cartier au for[t] de Kehl". (Gianni Monzali Coll.)

It is a classic 'Tarot de Besançon', with Juno and Jupiter, although it is not copying a particular Strasbourg model.³ The style of woodcut is rather crude but the colours are bright. So there was another cardmaker in Kehl in the 18th century. No one had heard of him so far. We only knew François Kechler who was active there in the 1780s.⁴ Intuitively I was inclined to date this new find to before Kechler, perhaps around 1770.

The cardmaker has put his initials A C on some of the cards, namely on the 4 of Coins (Fig. 1a), where they occupy the central escutcheon, enlightened by a radiating sun in the left part; on the king of Coins

(also Fig. 1a); and on the 9 of Cups (Fig. 2b), where they appear over a kind of three-top mountain (?). More interestingly, Gianni Monzali suggests that a "signature" may be visible on the basis of the throne of the king of Swords (Fig. 3), showing two flowers, then S & m (S E M?) plus a small device on the right which may be a stylised knife (the woodcutter's mark?). At the time of writing we are unable to offer a reasonable interpretation.

A visit to the Strasbourg City Archives,⁵ in October 2018, in the course of my research on the cardmakers of Alsace, was to yield a surprise among the various papers dealing with the 18th century administration of the city. A couple of letters, written by the abbé d'Herbain⁶ to the director of the Régie des cartes (the playing-card tax office), clearly mention the same cardmaker. It is a little amusing story of smuggling. On 5 October 1770 a search of the abbé d'Herbain's house carried out by the tax officers ended in the distraint of "douze jeux de cartes de tarots neufs de la fabrique d'Antoine Cezar cartier à Kehl" (12 tarot packs, unused, from the factory of Antoine Cezar cardmaker in Kehl),⁷ that had been smuggled, because they were much cheaper, being tax-free, than the cards made in Strasbourg where the tax on tarot cards was particularly heavy.

¹ Now in the collection of Gianni Monzali in Alessandria (Italy).

² What looks like an S seems actually to be an inverted Z.

³ It is not impossible that Antoine Cezar has tried to copy Nicolas François Laudier's tarot, as cut by Pierre Isnard (1746), whose woodblocks were to be used later by François Kechler.

⁴ See Thierry Depaulis, *Maîtres cartiers strasbourgeois*, Paris, Le Vieux Papier, 1989, p. 20; Sigmar Radau, *Französische Karten in Deutschland*, Band 2: *Das Pariser Bild*, 1, Berlin, 2013, pp. 94-95.

⁵ Now proudly called Archives de la ville et de l'eurométropole de Strasbourg... (later Archives de Strasbourg).

⁶ Jean-Marie Cuchot d'Herbain (1727-1801) was a canon of Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux and promoter of justice for the diocese of Strasbourg. In 1778 he was appointed auxiliary bishop of Trier. He was the brother of the military officer and amateur composer known as 'le Chevalier d'Herbain' (Jean-Louis Cuchot d'Herbain, 1720-1768).

⁷ Archives de Strasbourg, AA 2121.

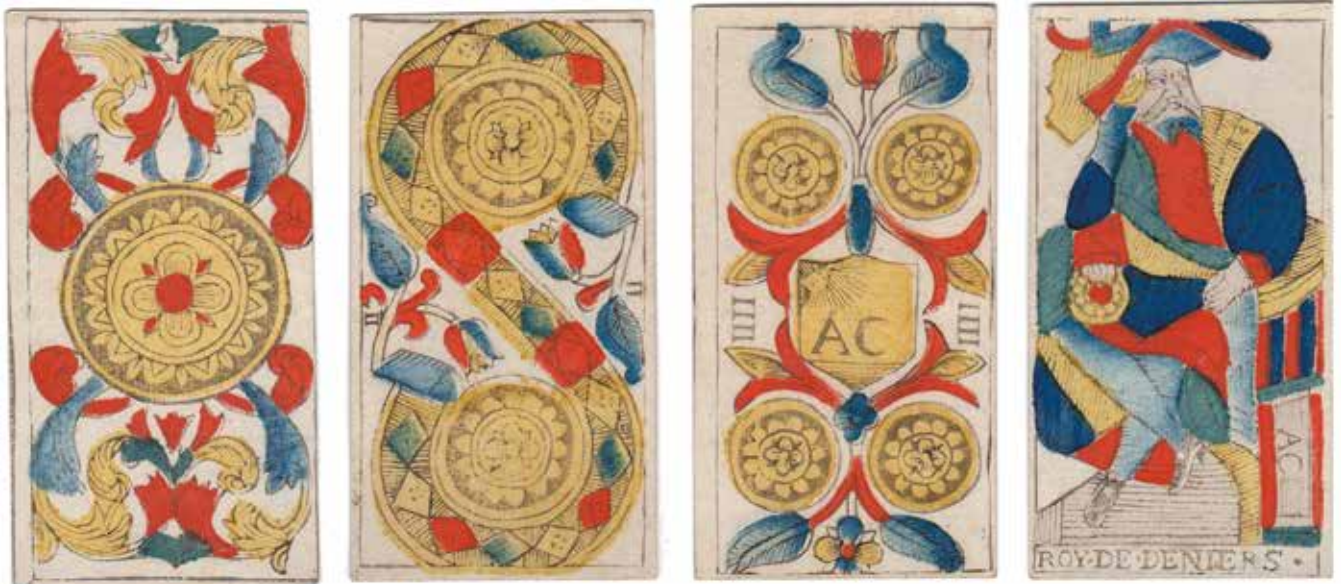


Fig. 1a: Four Coins cards.



Fig. 1b: Queen and Knight of Coins and King and Queen of Batons.



Fig. 2a: Four Batons cards.



Fig. 2b: Three Cups cards

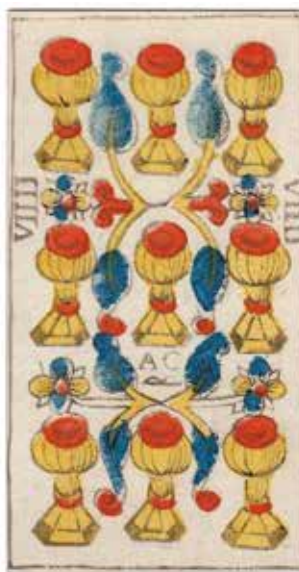


Fig. 3: The king of Swords with a possible woodcutter's signature.



Fig. 4: Trumps: Le Fol and I, Le Bateleur

My assumption was right: Antoine Cezar had preceded François Kechler. As we will see, he was more than just a predecessor and, before settling in Kehl, he had been making playing cards in Landau.

Kehl was certainly a good place for any tax-free trade. The city and fortress were facing Strasbourg, just across the Rhine river. A short walk allows anybody to cross the river (on a bridge). Today Kehl is tightly connected to Strasbourg by the main transportation network.

The small but strategic village was conquered by the French in 1678, and it was soon included in Strasbourg's defence system. From 1680 to 1688 Kehl was fortified by Vauban, Louis XIV's military architect. Like in similar places (Neuf-Brisach or Blaye, in the South-West of France), a town was laid out inside the

fortress. However, by the treaty of Ryswick, in 1698, the French had to surrender Kehl to the Margrave of Baden. Five years later the fortress was taken again by the French, who kept it until the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, with the peace of Rastatt (1714). Then, save for a brief French occupation during the War of the Polish Succession in 1733-35, Kehl was to remain under the sovereignty of the House of Baden. Times were getting more peaceful, and in 1754 the Margrave removed all military presence, so that the town could freely develop within the fortress. At the same time, tax pressure in France pushed various traders to settle in Kehl where they could do more business without tax. This was particularly true of tobacco. As Hidemi Uchida writes:

The development of Kehl deserves a special mention. The taxation of tobacco following the [King's] *déclaration* of 1749 gave rise to an emigration of the Strasburgers. Many individuals moved their trade to Kehl, setting up there manufactures and workshops, and they established warehouses for all sorts of goods. These new plants, [...] let the inhabitants of Kehl conceive a project in order to set up a general warehouse for all goods going downstream or upstream the Rhine.⁸

As we shall see this was also the case with playing cards. Antoine Cezar must have taken this opportunity; that smuggled cards from his workshop were found in Strasbourg would confirm the situation. It certainly was why, in the 1780s, François Kechler was there. In 1771, the Margraviates of Baden-Durlach and Baden-Baden merged (because the Baden-Baden line became extinct), and in 1774 the village was granted the status of city by Margrave Charles Frederick.

⁸ Hidemi Uchida, *Le tabac en Alsace aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles: essai sur l'histoire d'une économie régionale frontalière*, Strasbourg, 1997, p. 82 (my translation).



Fig. 5: Trumps Two to Five.



Fig. 6: Trumps XVIII to XXI.

Soon afterward the French playwright and polymath Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais rented the fort of Kehl from Charles Frederick and set up there a large printing shop in order to publish Voltaire's complete works, thus evading French censorship. He also bought the complete foundry of the famous English type designer John Baskerville and purchased three paper mills. From 1781 to 1789 more than 180 volumes, in various formats, came out of the Kehl presses.⁹

François Kechler and Beaumarchais must have passed each other many times while there!

Cardmakers in Kehl, Part Two

In 1784 a report was made on the cardmakers of Strasbourg by a tax controller who had visited them.¹⁰ From 1745 a tax was levied in France on playing cards and tarots; it was dramatically increased and its organisation deeply modified in 1751 (on which more later). The report is particularly critical about the three

⁹ Linda Gil, *L'édition Kehl de Voltaire. Une aventure éditoriale et littéraire au tournant des Lumières*, Paris, 2018.

¹⁰ Called *Etat de localité des ville et banlieüe de Strasbourg* (Report on the local usage in the city and suburb of Strasbourg), the text is almost entirely quoted in Henry-René D'Allemagne, *Les cartes à jouer du XIV^e au XX^e siècle*, Paris, 1906, II, pp. 224, 227-228, 230-232, though wrongly dated to 1782, whereas the original document (Paris, Archives Nationales, G/2/25, no. 1) clearly shows, in two places, the date of February 1784. Its author, one Clesse, was a "roving controller" ("contrôleur ambulant") for the Régie Générale des Aides & Droits y réunis, Direction de Metz (*Almanach des Trois-Evêchés pour l'année bissextile 1788*, Metz, (1787), p. 173).

cardmakers who were busy in the city at this time, Louis Carey, Bernard Sarramon, and the Veuve Benoist.¹¹

Interestingly a special section is entitled "Cartier de Kehl", and presents him in detail:

Il se nomme Kœchler, a deux sortes de moulages; l'un fort grossier, et a son bluteau; et l'autre fin, paroît gravé en cuivre, et ressemble au moulage du Royaume à s'y tromper. [...] Il vend le sixain d'entières 2 #, celui de piquet 1 #, et le jeu de tarot, 18 s, tandis que nos cartiers vendent les premières 3 # 12 s, les secondes 48 s, et le jeu de tarots, 28 s. Différences bien sensibles qui invitent à la fraude, laquelle se pratique avec d'autant plus de facilité que, sur toute la rive du Rhin, il n'y a ni employés, ni brigades pour la surveiller.

His name is Kœchler. He has two kinds of outputs: one is very crude, and bears his imprint, the other is fine, seems to be engraved in copper and looks like the Kingdom's design to be mistaken. [...] He sells one sizain of [six] 52-card packs for 2 livres, that of piquet for one livre, and one tarot pack for 18 sols, while our cardmakers sell the former for 3 livres 12 sols, the other [piquet cards] for 48 sols, and the tarot pack for 28 sols. These differences are of course significant, and they push toward smuggling, which is done all the more easily since, on the banks of the Rhine, there are neither [customs] officers nor squads to watch it.

Playing cards by François Kechler are preserved here and there: a tarot pack, of the 'Tarot de Besançon' type (with Juno and Jupiter as trumps II and V), is known in five copies¹² (and perhaps more) (Figs. 7-8), while Paris-pattern cards are rarer. The ones we show (Figs. 9-10) are in the collection of Manfred Hausler, whom I thank for his pictures.¹³

In his 2013 book Sigmar Radau mentioned that François Kechler married in Kehl in 1780,¹⁴ and that he had a son baptized in 1786. Actually, more children can be spotted thanks to a search with the FamilySearch website:¹⁵

- Franciscus Florentius was baptized on 15 November 1782,
- Eva Catharina was baptized on 14 November 1784,
- Franciscus Antonius was baptized on 17 April 1786,¹⁶



Fig. 7. Ace and 2 of Cups from a tarot pack by François Kechler, "marchand cartier a Kehl".

- Carolus was baptized on 25 December 1787,
- Margaritha Barbara was baptized on 18 September 1789.

A last child, Louisa Wilhelmina, was baptized on 3 May 1796. Probably the French attack on Kehl in 1793 may have forced the Kechlers to flee (and perhaps to have more children baptized elsewhere).

On 19 April 1824, Marguerite Barbe, as she is called (Margaritha Barbara, born 1789), married in Strasbourg a man named Louis Endrès. The act mentions the death of both her parents. We thus hear that "François Antoine Koechler, fabricant de cartes" died in Kehl on 22 March 1799; Catherine Keller's death is reported to have happened on 16 March 1800, also in Kehl.¹⁷

We will see when and where François Antoine or Franciscus Antonius, as he is mentioned in the parish registers in Latin, was born. But now we have to turn our eyes to... Landau.

¹¹ For these three Strasbourg cardmakers, see Depaulis, op. cit.

¹² British Museum, O'Donoghue F.10 (attributed to France...); Linz, Stadtmuseum (D. Hoffmann, E. Kroppenstedt, *Inventar-Katalog der Spielkarten-Sammlung des Stadtmuseums Linz*, Bielefeld, 1969, no. 1); Musée historique de Haguenau (unpublished); Prague, Národní Muzeum (František Svátek, *Hrací karty v Praze*, Prague, 1989, no. 27c); Freiburg im Breisgau, Augustinermuseum (F. Büchler, K.J. Schultz, *Mit offenen Karten: alte Spielkarten aus dem Augustinermuseum in Freiburg und aus Privatsammlungen*, Freiburg/Br., 2004, no. 78).

¹³ They are also reproduced, with a similar jack of Clubs from the Balan collection, in Sigmar Radau, op. cit., pp. 94-95 (Nr. P 14).

¹⁴ He married Catharina Keller in the Catholic church on 22nd May 1780.

¹⁵ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) have microfilmed many BMD registers throughout Europe. They have set a large (and free) database called FamilySearch, which is searchable, though with its complexities. It is however quite helpful for German sources, although indexes are sometimes awkward, because the voluntary indexers know neither German nor Latin...

¹⁶ Also in Radau, op. cit., p. 94.

¹⁷ Strasbourg, online État-civil registers on Adeloach (Archives départementales du Bas-Rhin).



Fig. 8. Twelve trump cards from a tarot pack by François Kechler. Trump VII, the Chariot, still bears Pierre Isnard's signature of 1746 (for Nicolas-François Laudier).

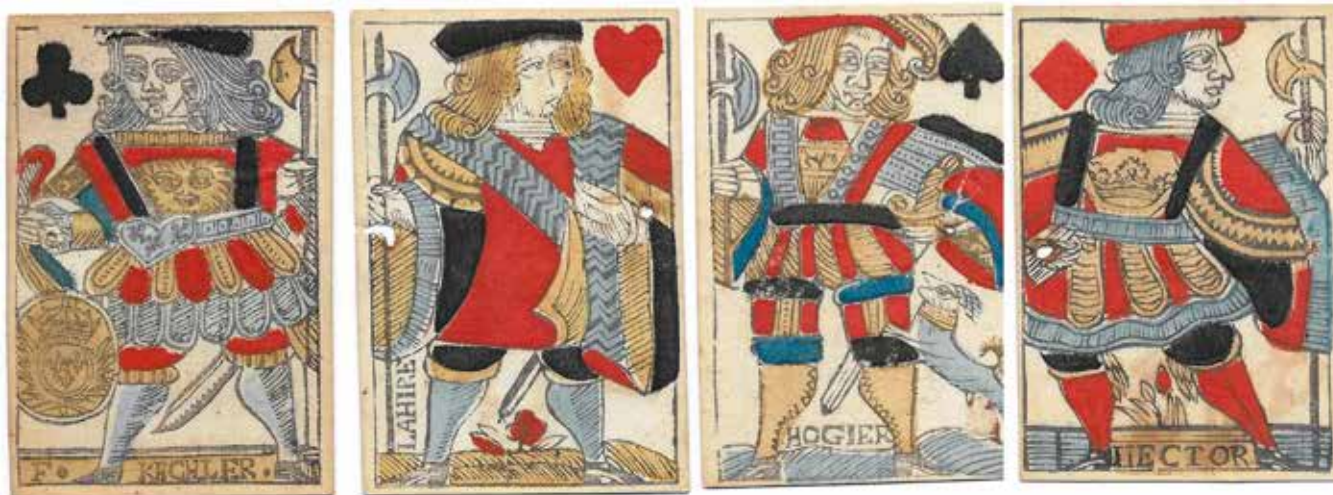


Fig. 9. Four Paris-pattern jacks by François Kechler. These cards were obviously made for smuggling, since the courts follow the same pattern as in Strasbourg. The jack of Clubs, signed F. KECHLER, shows the royal arms of France on his "bluteau". (Manfred Hausler Coll.)



Fig. 10. Four Paris-pattern cards, two kings and two queens from the same series, most probably also by François Kechler. (Manfred Hausler Coll.)

Landau

During the same visit to the Archives de Strasbourg I could examine an important document (which shamefully I had neglected thirty years ago), dated December 1751, that explains how playing cards were made, how cardmakers could cheat and evade taxation, how they had to be controlled.¹⁸ The reason for such a long *mémoire* was that now Strasbourg had to comply with the general tax regulations of the Kingdom, not only for tobacco (see above), but also for playing cards. Until 1751 making playing cards in Strasbourg had been tax-free.

In this *mémoire* we read:

Cinq: objet. Fabrication des cartes
restreinte a certaines villes

Le peu de fabrication des cartes qui se fait a Landau et Neuf Brisack¹⁹, et le peu de produit qui en resulteroit, ne permettant pas que la Regie y entretint des employés pour les exercer, il a fallu nécessairement y interdire la fabrication. L'on ne présume pas que celle qui s'y fait par les cartiers qui y sont actuellement établis forme le principal objet de leur commerce, en tout cas, ils auront la ressource de se retirer dans Strasbourg, Colmar ou Belfort qui sont les seules villes autorisée [sic] par l'arrêt de reglement.

¹⁸ *Mémoire ... pour servir d'instruction ... du droit sur les cartes en Alsace*, Archives de Strasbourg, AA 2120.

¹⁹ Neuf-Brisach ("New Breisach") was built in 1698–1702 on the left bank of the Rhine after the loss of Breisach (Breisach am Rhein), on the other side of the river. A research in the Archives départementales du Haut-Rhin, where Neuf-Brisach is now, in 2019, revealed the presence of a cardmaker there, called Pierre Suquet, from 1702 to 1722. It seems his successors have continued to make playing cards until around 1751.

[Section] Five. Object: The making of playing cards restricted to some cities.

The little output of playing cards that are made in Landau and Neuf Brisach, and the small (tax) revenue that can be expected, do not allow the Régie (the tax administration) to maintain employees to control²⁰ them; therefore, it has been necessary to forbid all production there. One does not presume that, for the cardmakers who have settled there, making playing cards is the only and main object of their trade;²¹ in all case they will be free to move to Strasbourg, Colmar or Belfort which are the only towns authorized by law.

Heretofore Landau has not been remarked as a place where playing cards were made, although in their recent book *Spielkarten und Kartenmacher in Mannheim und der Kurpfalz*, Peter Endebrock, Jürgen Platz and Sigmar Radau, record "Landauer Karten" which were found in early 1738 by a *Visitor* in the corner shop of a widow Cossa, who was selling large numbers of *ohngestempelte* (unstamped) playing cards in the little village of Germersheim (now a city in the Land Rhineland-Palatinate), not far from Landau.²²

In the 18th century Landau, today a German city in the Land Rhineland-Palatinate (Rheinland-Pfalz), was French. It was so until 1815, when the Congress of Vienna decided to detach this northern part of Alsace and to give it to the Kingdom of Bavaria.²³

French rule started in the 17th century, first as a 'protection' which the ten free cities of the Décapole (from *deka poleis*, 'ten cities' in Greek),²⁴ with Landau as one of them, requested to the King of France in the course of the Thirty Years' War. From 1633 troops under French command settled in most cities of the Décapole, including Landau, adding to the burdens of the war. The Treaty of Münster, signed in 1648, which put an end to this terrible war, gave all power to the French over the ten cities. But, contrary to the Sundgau in the south of Alsace, which became part of the French Kingdom, the ten cities were only under its protection, and they sometimes showed reluctance to accept French rule. It was only in 1679, following the Treaties of Nijmegen, that the Décapole had to swear full obedience to the French King. Like Kehl and other such places, Landau was fortified by Vauban in 1688–99. During the War of the Spanish Succession it was many times besieged, lost (by the French) and taken back in 1713. From then on it belonged to Alsace, of which it was the northernmost

town. When the French départements were created in 1790, Landau became part of the new département of Bas-Rhin, until 1815.

Antoine Cezar again

A quick search in the FamilySearch database (through the French website Geneanet²⁵) yielded, surprisingly, one 'Antony Cesar' in Landau, who had a daughter, Genoveva Teresia, baptized in the local Catholic church. No profession is given in these genealogical records. The only clue that puzzled me was the strange name of the mother: Maria Barbara *Besgeierin*. This rang a bell in my mind. *Besgeierin* is of course the feminine form of 'Besgeier', a name I had already encountered in Strasbourg. Actually it is the phonetic rendering (with much variation!) of a... Gascon family name. Elizabeth Odile Pescayre, although born in Haslach, a small town near Strasbourg, was the daughter of François Pescayre, a man who had come from his native Gascony. Such a 'foreign' name (meaning fisher in Occitan) caused many problems to churchmen (who had to write it down in their parish registers), notaries and other public officers. Born in 1711 Elizabeth Odile Pescayre was the wife of no less than three Strasbourg cardmakers, Pierre-Jean Laborie, whom she spoused in 1736, but who died in 1756, Jean-Claude Jeantet, whom she married in 1759, and after his death, in 1775, while in her sixties, she remarried in 1776 with Louis Carey, who was by twenty-six years younger than her! She finally died in 1787. Because she was illiterate and could not write her name, its spelling was very often distorted as Besquer, Besquair, Besquaire, Piscaire, Biscayre, or... Besgayer. In one occasion a (German-speaking) vicar, who must have been a fine linguist, called her *Fischer* – the direct translation of *pescayre* in German.

I wondered whether this Maria Barbara *Besgeier* could have some sort of family links with Elizabeth Odile, and therefore – who knows? – with cardmaking... First, I checked the parish registers of Haslach (now Niederhaslach), an easy task since nearly all such registers have been digitized and put online by all French departmental archives. Indeed, Elizabeth Odile Pescayre had a sister called Maria Barbara. Marie Barbe, to call her in French, was baptized on 29 June 1713. She must be Antony Cesar's wife. Now the more difficult task was to see the Landau parish

²⁰ In the tax jargon of the time, the French verb *exercer* had this special meaning.

²¹ They may indeed retail paper and stationary, or even books, as some did.

²² Peter Endebrock, Jürgen Platz, Sigmar Radau, *Spielkarten und Kartenmacher in Mannheim und der Kurpfalz*, Berlin, 2019, p. 70.

²³ Actually Landau and some other places taken from former French départements were given to the Austrian Empire, but in 1816 Austria ceded these territories to Bavaria.

²⁴ The Décapole (German Zehnstädtebund) was composed of Schlestadt/Sélestat, Haguenau, Wissembourg, Colmar, Obernai, Rosheim, Turckheim, Kaysersberg, Munster, Landau, all small or medium-size cities in Alsace.

²⁵ Geneanet is a big French genealogical website and database, with a powerful search engine, which works in many languages (including Norwegian and Finnish!). They have a partnership with FamilySearch.

registers. Unfortunately there is no such service similar to the French digitized 'état-civil'. However, the FamilySearch database has the option of visualizing the digitized microfilms the Mormons have made. Finally I could access what I was looking for, and see the microfilmed parish registers of Landau, now digitized.

On 15 October 1738, Genoveva Teresia Cezar, the daughter of Antoine Cezar, and Maria Barbara Besgeier was baptized in the (only) Catholic church. The father is just styled "civis et mercatoris Landau", citizen (or burgess) and merchant of Landau. His signature is: *Antoine Cezar*, in French.²⁶ Is he the same man as the Kehl cardmaker?

A second child was born in 1741, Franciscus Antonius Simon, and his father is then called "cartary et civis hujatis", cardmaker and citizen 'from here'²⁷. His mother is Maria Barbara *Pisgeüer*... And when, two years later, she was the godmother of a little girl, Maria Barbara Kechler, daughter of Thomas Kechler, whom we will meet again soon, she was styled "Maria Barbara Bisguere uxor Antonij Cæsar civis et cartary Land(aui)",²⁸ which I think now everyone can understand.

Thomas was their third child, born on 24 April 1745, baptized the following day:

Hodie vigesima quinta die mensis Aprilis anni millesimi septingentesimi quadagesimi quinti a me infra scripto vicario baptizatus est Thomas filius Antonij Cæsar civis et chartularum lusorum opificis et Mariæ Barbaræ Bissgeiger conjugum commorantium in hac parochia et civitate, natus die præcedenti supra dicti mensis et anni; patrinus fuit Thomas Kechler civis et mercator hujatis, matrinxa vero Catharina Songerin uxor Matthæi Braun civis et tutoris hujatis, qui præsentem patre omnes una mecum subscripserunt.
(Signed: *Thomas Kechler patrinus — Antoine Cezar pater — Catharina* [in typical German script] *matrinx — A. Streicher vicarius*)²⁹

Today 25th day of April of the year 1745, by me the undersigned vicar, was baptized Thomas, son of Antonius [Antonij or Antony is the genitive case of Antonius] Cæsar, citizen and maker of playing cards, and Maria Barbara Bissgeiger [*sic!*] married, residing in this parish and city, born the preceding day of the said month and year; his godfather was Thomas Kechler, citizen and merchant from here, his godmother was Catharina Songer, wife of Mattheus Braun, citizen and shoemaker from here, who, with the father being present, all have signed with me.

Although the vicar seems to be German-speaking, the language and the words are more or less based on French phrases, as in most Alsatian Catholic parish registers.

Maria Barbara gave birth to one last child in Landau, in July 1749. The baby was christened Peter Francis (Petrus Franciscus), maybe Pierre François, because I suspect Antoine Cezar to be more French than German. As a family name Cezar is not uncommon in Lorraine. And we know that his wife had a Gascon father. This act is interesting:

Hodie vigesima quarta mensis julij anni millesimi septingentesimi quadagesimi noni a me infra scripto parochia et canonico baptizatus est Petrus Franciscus filius Antonij Cezar civis et chartarum confectoris et Mariæ Barbaræ Pescayre conjugum commorantium in hac parochia, natus pridie; patrinus fuit Petrus Riouperoux barbitonsor et civis hujatis, et matrinxa Francisca Genoveva Rocheville vidua de f. Georgii Cezar qui præsentem patre se una mecum subscripserunt.

(Signed: *Ryoupeirroux — françoise genevieve cezare — Antoine Cezar — Le Pellissier de Chavigny*)³⁰

Today 24th day of July of the year 1749, by me the undersigned rector and canon, was baptized Pierre Francis, son of Antoine Cezar, citizen and maker of playing cards, and Maria Barbara Pescayre married, residing in this parish, born yesterday; his godfather was Pierre Riouperoux, barber and citizen from here, and his godmother was Françoise Geneviève Rocheville, widow of Georges Cezar, who, with the father being present, have signed with me.

Pescayre! Here Maria Barbara's family name is correctly written. No doubt that Pierre Joseph Le Pellissier de Chavigny, the new rector, would know how to spell it. I have not been able to understand who Georges Cezar was, perhaps an uncle or a brother of Antoine. Obviously he is a French-speaking person, married to a French woman. His widow, Françoise Geneviève Cezar, née Rocheville, is here the godmother. The godfather, a *barbitonsor* (barber), bears a French name, too.

Together with the Cezars we also encounter the Kechlers. They were clearly close friends. In 1743 Marie Barbe Pescayre was godmother to Thomas Kechler's daughter Maria Barbara. Two years later it was Thomas Kechler who was godfather to Thomas Cezar. On 17 February 1732 Thomas had married "Catharina Scheirigin oriunda ex Kirweiler", that is, Catherine Scheirig from Kirweiler, today spelled Kirrwiller (dept.

²⁶ Landau (Pfalz), Catholic parish registers, DGS 7948190, BMD (Births Marriages Deaths) 1730–1740, 15 October 1738, accessed through FamilySearch.

²⁷ Alsatian Latin *hujatis*, which has its own declension (gen. *hujatis*), is very often used in local documents. It is the (modern) Latin equivalent of the German *allhier*.

²⁸ Landau (Pfalz), Catholic parish registers, DGS 7948190, BMD 1740–1751, 30 November 1743.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 25 April 1745.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 24 July 1749.

Bas-Rhin), an Alsatian village.³¹ From the act we learn that Thomas Kechler was a barber, too. A daughter was born in 1733, christened Maria Elisabetha. But Catherine must have died soon, since Thomas remarried on 31 January 1735.³² The new spouse was Anna Barbara Braun. From this second marriage twelve children were born. We have seen that Maria Barbara's godmother, in 1743, was no less than Marie Barbe Pescayre (signing: *mari barbe pesquer!*), but the following child, Antonius Franciscus, born in 1745, had Antoine Cezar as godfather. Was he the François (François Antoine) Kechler who made playing cards in Kehl? It is tempting to conclude so, but, although I have not found him buried in Landau, a second Antonius Franciscus was baptized on 5 November 1748, with the same godfather!

Hodie quinta mensis novembris anni millesimi septingentesimi quadragesimi octavi a me infra scripto parochio baptizatus est Antonius Franciscus filius Thomæ Kechler civis et mercatoris et Mariæ Barbaræ Braunin conjugum commorantium in hac parochia, natus pridie ; patrinus fuit Antonius Cæsar civis et chartarum opifex, matrina Anna Maria Heckmannin uxor Josephi Sordillon civis hujatis, qui præsentem patre se una mecum subscripserunt.³³

Today 5th of November of the year 1748, by me the undersigned rector, was baptized Antonius Franciscus, son of Thomas Kechler, citizen and merchant, and Maria Barbara Braun married, residing in this parish, born yesterday; his godfather was Antoine Cezar, citizen and cardmaker, the godmother was Anna Maria Heckman, wife of Joseph Sordillon, citizen from here, who, with the father being present, have signed with me.

I believe this second Antonius Franciscus or Anton Franz is the Kehl cardmaker of the 1780s. Born in 1748, he was 32 when he married in Kehl. Being Antoine Cezar's godson it is tempting to imagine that, when Antoine retired, around 1780, Franz/François Kechler took over his godfather's workshop. Apparently he did not inherit the tarot woodblocks, and preferred to buy those



Fig. 11. Two of Coins showing the imprint of Nicolas François Laudier.

engraved in 1746 by Pierre Isnard for Nicolas François Laudier.

After 1749 we do not hear of Antoine Cezar any longer. We know that from November 1751 Landau was ruled out of the list of towns where playing cards could be made. Antoine had a few options at his disposal: either he would switch, like many of his colleagues, to just retailing paper and stationary, giving up the making of playing cards, or he would move to one of the three 'authorized' places, Strasbourg, Colmar or Belfort. But there was a third option: going to Kehl. Kehl was perfectly suitable: being under the sovereignty of the Margrave of Baden, it was free of tax, and the village which had grown in the fortress was wanting to welcome merchants and manufacturers. On the other side of the Rhine, taxes had gone so high that smuggling was extremely tempting. We may hypothesize that Antoine Cezar chose to move to Kehl, and once there sell his cards to Strasbourg interested buyers.

He was there in 1770, as we have seen. The FamilySearch database has a record of Barbara Besgayer's death in Kehl on 30 April 1772. Her husband is called Antonius *Lezar*, an obvious misreading for Cezar. I could not find any digitized version of the parish register where this death is reported. But it is certain that Marie Barbe Pescayre, wife of Antoine Cezar, is meant.

In 1766 one *Franciscus Antonius Cezar* married in Kehl Anna Maria Mueller.³⁴ It is almost certainly Antoine Cezar's son, born on 28 September 1741 (see above).

French tax legislation

Here we have to give some more explanations. The first taxation on playing cards in France was decided by King Henry III in 1583, but it failed to be collected because of the Wars of Religion. Henry IV revived it in 1605, with a selection of only seven cities that were allowed to shelter cardmakers. However, the new law was given up in 1609. The tax was re-established by Henry IV's son and successor Louis XIII in 1622, with little success until 1631, when the seven cities were increased to eleven.³⁵ The Fronde (1648–52) interrupted it, but the tax soon came back; it was revised by King Louis XIV, but the new system met all oppositions, and it was finally suppressed in 1671. From 1671 to 1701, that is, for thirty years, cardmakers were free. Free to sell their cards with no tax, free to settle anywhere, and they took advantage of this situation,

³¹ *Ibid.*, BMD 1706–1730 [sic], 17 February 1732.

³² *Ibid.*, 31 January 1735.

³³ *Ibid.*, 5 November 1748.

³⁴ FamilySearch indexes (through Geneanet), "Katholisch, Kehl, Offenbourg, Baden" [sic], marriage record, 27 January 1766.

³⁵ Namely Paris, Rouen, Lyon, Toulouse, Troyes, Limoges, Thiers, Orléans, Angers, Romans, Marseille. In 1668 Bordeaux was added to the list.

particularly at a time when the consumption of playing cards was booming.

Because of the War of the Spanish Succession, which had burst in 1700, the French King had to find money everywhere, and the taxation of playing cards and tarots was resumed in 1701, though in new terms. A limitation of the towns where making playing cards would be restricted was not part of the new edict. Alsace and the new northern provinces – the so-called ‘Pays Conquis’, that is, Flanders, Artois and Hainaut, conquered over the Spanish Low Countries – petitioned for being exempted. Louis XIV granted them the required exemption, so that these provinces were put out of the tax system. This freedom certainly encouraged more cardmakers to settle in Strasbourg and also in Neuf-Brisach. The tax on playing cards and tarots was to last until 1719, when the Regent Philippe d’Orléans, advised by John Law, who was to become the Controller General of Finances, abolished many taxes, including the tax on playing cards. However, after some twenty-five years of renewed ‘freedom’, cardmakers were again submitted to the tax in 1745, when King Louis XV decided to re-establish it. Now all provinces had to be subjected to the tax, including Alsace. But Strasbourg, claiming to have a special status, succeeded in staying kept out. Until then no restriction had been enforced as to the number of towns allowed to have cardmakers. But all this changed in 1751.

In January 1751 King Louis XV declared that a “Royal Military School” should be built in Paris, and that the construction should not impact the Royal Treasury, but instead would be financed by the tax on playing cards. Since the whole revenue was weak, it was decided to raise the rate, which, from 18 *deniers* per pack, of whatever composition, would be set at 1 *denier* per card, so that a 52-card pack would bear a tax of 52 *deniers*! Some 4 *sols* and 4 *deniers*, that is, more or less the retail price for one pack. Tarot packs were taxed at 78 *deniers*, that is, 6 *sols* 6 *deniers*, thus doubling the price of a pack.³⁶ In November 1751, further regulations were passed: cardmakers had to use special sheets of paper with 20 watermarks (one for each card in the sheet) and the making of playing cards was to be limited to 63 towns only. (A report of 1750 complained that there were 115 cities where playing cards were made! This certainly was too much.)

In Alsace only three cities were selected: Strasbourg, Colmar and Belfort. (Belfort was then part of Alsace.) This is why the aforementioned report said “it has been necessary to forbid all production” in Landau

and Neuf-Brisach. These were obviously too small places.

The smuggling of playing cards soon became a concern. In 1755 State Secretary Marc Pierre de Voyer de Paulmy d’Argenson wrote to Jean-Baptiste Denis de

Regemorte, then assistant to the royal praetor (*préteur royal*) of Strasbourg:

Je me suis apperceu, Monsieur, par les Etats qui viennent de m’être présentés que le produit du droit sur les cartes avoit souffert quelque diminution en Alsace et surtout à Strasbourg. J’ay découvert en en cherchant la cause, que cela provenoit de l’usage que l’on y fait assez librement de cartes de fabrication étrangère.³⁷

I have realised, Monsieur, from reports that have been shown to me, that the revenue from the tax on playing cards has undergone a drop in Alsace and particularly in Strasbourg. By looking for the cause, I have discovered that it came from a rather free use of cards of foreign manufacture.

Do doubt that the “foreign manufacture” was that of Kehl.

Antoine Cezar’s last puzzle

Now that we can see the reasons why Antoine Cezar moved to Kehl, let’s come back to Landau. Before having a child in 1738, Antoine and his wife must have been married. Unfortunately I have failed to find any wedding of the pair in the parish registers of Landau. Clearly Antoine and Marie Barbe did not marry there. I tried... Strasbourg. After all, Antoine Cezar may have come from Strasbourg as well. Did he marry there? Although all six Catholic parishes have registers and indexes (called ‘tables’), all digitized, I have not found any Cezar being married there in the 1730s. And what about Marie Barbe Pescayre? I was extremely surprised to find her married in 1737 at Saint-Pierre-le-Jeune of Strasbourg, though with another man! There can be no confusion: she is the very “Maria Barbara Pescayre oriunda ex Haslach”, Elizabeth Odile’s sister. The act reads thus:

George / Antoine Georges
et / Pescayre / Marie Barbe
5 may

Hodie quinto maij anni 1737 tribus proclamationibus in ecclesia nostra publice factis totidem in ecclesia fortalitii Kehlensis ut nobis per litteras testimoniales venerabilis Dni Eustachii de Goldbach dicti loci rectoris die 4. maij currentis dicti anni datas et penes nos remanentes constitit, ac nullo detecto impedimento a me infrascripto prævie recepto mutuo consensu sacro matrimonii

³⁶ Needless to say that the old French currency, before the Revolution, was based on the pan-European Carolingian *libra-solidus-denarius* monetary system. British older members will certainly understand how it ran: there were 20 *sols* (shillings) in one *livre* (pound), and 12 *deniers* (pence, abbreviated d) in one *sol*.

³⁷ Archives de Strasbourg, AA 2120, letter of 5 December 1755.

vinculo in facie Ecclesiae conjuncti fuerunt Antonius Georgius George argentinensis filius Cæsaris George et Annae Obrÿ conjugum defunctorum, parochianus noster, et Maria Barbara Pescayre oriunda ex Haslach hujus diocesis filia Francisci Pescayre et Barbaræ Franon conjugum, jam in fortalitis [sic] Kehlensis commorans. Testes adfuerunt honesti viri dd. David Benoit, David Wille, Petrus Guillermin et Joannes Guissing omnes cives hujates qui cum sponso et sponsa et me plebano subscripserunt.

marie barbe pescayre / Antoine george / DavidBenoits

*David vuille / pierre guillermain
Jean Jacque Guissing marchand
JJ Doyen plebanus [rector]³⁸*

Today 5th May of the year 1737 after three banns published in our church, and also at the same time in the church of the fort of Kehl, as it appears from the testimonial letters sent by Mr. Eustace de Goldbach, rector of the said place, dated 4th May of the current said year, and kept by us, and no impediment having been detected by me the undersigned, having received the previous mutual consent of the sacred matrimony, in the face of the Church were joined in marriage Antonius Georgius George of Strasbourg, son of Cæsar George and Anna Obrÿ [Aubry ?] both married and deceased, our parishioner, and Maria Barbara Pescayre from Haslach in this diocese, daughter of Franciscus Pescayre and Barbara Franon married, presently living in the fort of Kehl. Witnesses were honest men Mssrs. David Benoit, David Wille, Petrus Guillermin and Joannes Guissing all citizens from here who, with husband and wife and me rector, have signed.

Among the witnesses we recognise David Benoit, one of the prominent cardmakers of Strasbourg, and Jean-Jacques Guissing, his son-in-law. Antoine Georges George, George being his last name, son of César George, is absolutely unknown.³⁹ His profession is not told. We just hear that Marie Barbe Pescayre lives... in Kehl.

Since the probability of two young women with exactly the same given names and surnames – Pescayre being, as we have seen, quite alien in the local onomastics –, both having connections with

playing-cards, is extremely thin, I cannot but accept the idea that we have to do with the same person.

However, Antoine Georges George is not Antoine Cezar, although they have the same first name, and although George father is (somewhat provocatively) christened César. These are just coincidences. That Marie Barbe is residing in Kehl is not. There must be some link.

But we have to explain how, being married in May 1737 with a man called George, she gave birth to a child by another man in Landau in October 1738. The only hypothesis I can put forward is that Antoine Georges George died soon, say, within six months, and that his widow remarried immediately, a move that was quite common in those days. Widows and widowers rarely remained alone for a long time. But none of the parish death registers indexes of Strasbourg has a man called George. If he really died, it was not in Strasbourg. And no other marriage for Marie Barbe Pescayre. Since there is nothing in Strasbourg as well as in Landau, we may suppose Marie Barbe married Antoine Cezar before February 1738, somewhere else. It would be interesting to check the Kehl parish registers. Unfortunately they do not seem to be available online. The FamilySearch database is here helpless.

To sum it up, we have the following cardmakers:

Antoine Cezar, perhaps born in Lorraine around 1710; married in 1737/38 to Marie Barbe Pescayre (b. Haslach 1713), cardmaker in Landau from at least 1738 to c. 1752; 4 children; then moved to Kehl; cited there in 1770; in 1772 Marie Barbe Pescayre died in Kehl; we don't know when and where Antoine Cezar died.

Franz/François Kechler, born in Landau 4 November 1748 (godfather Antoine Cezar); moved to Kehl, where he married Catherine Keller in 1780; cardmaker in Kehl 1780–1799; 6 children; died in Kehl 22 March 1799; Catherine Keller died in Kehl 16 March 1800.

My thanks to Peter Endebrock, Manfred Hausler and Gianni Monzali.

³⁸ Archives de Strasbourg, St-Pierre-le-Jeune, Marriages 1730–1748.

³⁹ George is a very common surname in the neighbouring département of Vosges.

Double-ending

in English cards

Written by Ken Lodge

Today's norm of double-ended cards, both courts and pip cards, was accepted and became the norm in English cards rather late in comparison with most Continental European countries. There are plenty of examples of double-ended courts from the 18th and early 19th centuries from France, the Low Countries, north Germany and Scandinavia. The first attempt in England dates from c.1800 with Ludlow's Knights cards made by T. Wheeler. Even by English standards these are crudely produced and clearly didn't find favour with card-players. It wasn't until c.1850 that English makers made another attempt to introduce double-ended courts. This coincides with a similar change in American cards. De La Rue exhibited them at the Great Exhibition of 1851 and a number of other makers had introduced them by the late 1850s. When new makers appeared after 1862, such as James English and Willis, only double-ended courts were produced by these makers. There still must have been a demand for single-figure packs, as De La Rue and Reynolds were still producing them with their own AS after 1862. However, the pip cards remained single-ended until after 1875, even in the case of the new makers. This is in contrast with the American situation where many packs with single-figure courts had double-ended pip cards.

There are basically three ways to achieve double-ending: (i) a horizontal division across the figure, achieved by using the top half of the figure twice; (ii) a diagonal division across the figure; (iii) an integrated design achieved by a complete redrawing of the figures. The second option was the

one favoured by the standard Paris pattern and its Belgian/Genoese variant; the other two were both



Horizontal division: Woolley (left), Goodall (right)



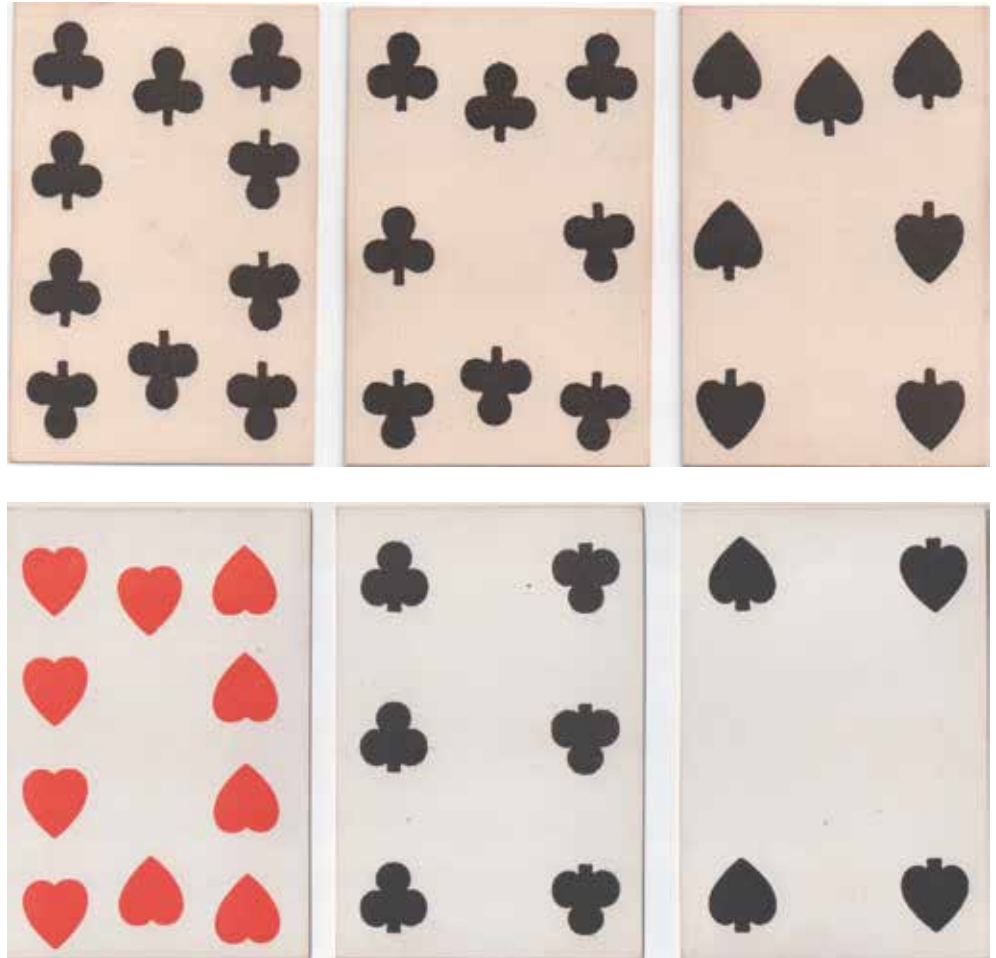
Integrated design: Hardy (left), Hunt/Bancks (right)

used by English makers. I illustrate two examples of each type.

It is very difficult to pinpoint when some of these packs were introduced, in particular because of the length of the undifferentiated period of Old Frizzle (1828-62). However, there are some certain dates that we can use to try to determine the likely date of introduction, which no doubt varied from maker to maker. We know De La Rue had them in 1851; we know Hardy ceased trading in 1853; Hunt became Bancks in 1849. So, c.1850 seems to be about right for the introduction of double-ended courts. In the case of Hunt, I have one example of their double-ended courts with a Hunt Old Frizzle. Most of the double-ended packs with this design are by Bancks and the Hunt AS was replaced by the Bancks one in 1849, as mentioned above, so unless old Hunt aces were used up by Bancks after the change of name, the Hunt pack with double-ended courts suggests an introduction date of c.1847/48.

Pip cards are a different matter, however. As I have already mentioned, they don't appear in most packs until after 1875. The earliest example I have is in the piquet format by Bancks from the Old Frizzle period, where a diagonal arrangement of the pips was used (illustration upper right).

From after 1862 I have another pack by Bancks in standard format with a different solution, in which all the pips on one side of the card have the same orientation (illustration lower right).



But even the first indexed cards from 1876-82 had single-ended pip cards and as late as the early 20th century indexless packs were made with double-ended courts and single-ended pip cards. (For a number of examples, see my Goodall catalogue list at <https://bit.ly/ken-lodge>.)

Libro del 1747

sulle minchiate, e altri giochi

Written by Franco Pratesi

English Summary

The book under study was published in Rome in 1747 by Brunetti, a canon of the Roman church, who was also publishing books on religious, mathematic, and scientific topics. All of them were dedicated (and addressed) to noblewomen and aristocrats. The largest part of this book describes the card game of Minchiate, followed by a short treatment of Hombre and a series of examples of chess endgames and openings; a few final pages contain some problems of algebra, intended to provide elements for computations required in everyday trade. We are mainly interested in the part on Minchiate, which is organised in sequential chapters, with literary digressions separately placed between each of them. A first part explains the laws of the game, whereas the suggestions on how to play are listed in a second part; in the present study, this account of the game has been briefly reviewed. A survey has also been conducted on the copies of this work that have been preserved, and the rather surprising result is that more items can be found abroad than in Italy, with a significant portion in the USA.

Il libro sui Giuochi

Il libro che prendiamo in esame è senz'altro un'opera importante sulla materia¹. Fra i giochi presentati nel libro, minchiate, ombre (hombre), e scacchi, il gioco delle minchiate è trattato per primo e occupa da solo la metà del volume; alla fine ci sono anche poche pagine con alcuni problemi di algebra intesi come esempi utili per risolvere casi pratici del commercio. Per certi aspetti il libro di Brunetti - relativamente alla parte sulle minchiate - non è troppo diverso da quello attribuito all'abate ferrarese Luigi Bernardi e stampato pure a Roma già nel 1728, il primo sulla

¹ D. Francesco Saverio Brunetti da Corinaldo, *Giuochi delle Minchiate, Ombre, Scacchi, Ed altri d'ingegno*. Roma, per il Bernabò, e Lazzarini, 1747.



materia². La principale differenza strutturale è che qui il contributo letterario-erudito viene tenuto accuratamente confinato nelle *Note Allegoriche* che seguono i capitoletti dedicati alla tecnica del gioco. Per noi, ciò significa che possiamo saltare facilmente tutta la parte letteraria e le frequenti citazioni dai classici

² F. Pratesi, Minchiate le Regole Generali di Roma e Macerata. *The Playing-Card*, Vo, 48 no. 3 (2020) 96-102.

latini; per chi fosse interessato, si può rimandare a un recente studio di fonte autorevole, che prende brevemente in considerazione questo libro, *Note Allegoriche* comprese³.

Come prima presentazione del libro può allora servire la seguente tabella, in cui è riprodotto l'indice, con i numeri delle pagine. In caratteri corsivi sono elencati i capitoli su argomenti diversi dalle minchiate, che qui, come avviene per le *Note Allegoriche*, non saranno presi in esame.

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Questo libro si distingue da tutti gli altri che forniscono istruzioni per i giochi di conversazione (e in particolare per le minchiate) per più aspetti, sia di forma che di contenuto, e merita quindi un'analisi e una discussione specifica.

Sintesi del testo in esame

Notizie e spiegazioni

In questa parte i capitoli si susseguono senza un numero d'ordine, che qui - come già nella tabella con l'indice - verrà inserito per maggiore chiarezza. Spesso l'autore descrive la situazione in maniera sintetica e precisa, tanto che sembra utile riportare fra virgolette il suo stesso testo. La lingua italiana non è quella di oggi, ma rimane comprensibile.

1. *Mazzo delle Carte*. "Questo Giuoco si fa con un mazzo è di 97 carte, Sono queste le 4 seguenze volgari di Spade, Bastoni, Danari, e Coppe; ogni seguenza ha 14 Carte. Vi sono poi 40 Tarocchi, e 'l Matto".

2. *Le quattro Seguenze*. L'ordine di presa delle carte dei semi va da 10 a 1 per spade e bastoni, ma da 1 a 10 per coppe e denari. Solo il Re conta 5, le altre carte 1 se vinte agli avversari.

3. *Tarocchi*. "I Tarocchi sono notati co i numeri Romani dall'I sino al XXXV; i primi cinque si chiamano Papi, gli ultimi cinque Arie, e sono 36 Stella, 37 Luna, 38 Sole, 39 Mondo, 40 Trombe. Il loro valore è dal 2 fino al 5 3 ed 1, 10, 13, 20, 28, Matto, 30 sino a 35 vagliono 5 e le arie 10."

4. *Matto*. "Questo non è né Tarocco né Cartiglia entra in tutte le verzicole, e ne forma una col massimo, e minimo Tarocco; non si perde mai se non si perdono tutte le carte, perché quando si giuoca si ripiglia, ed in sua vece si da una Cartiglia."

5. *Verzicole*. Elenca le verzicole. Tre o 4 Re. 1+Matto+Trombe. 1+13+28. 10+20+30 (o 20+30+40 o 10+20+30+40). Tre o più Papi in fila. Tre o più carte in fila dal 28 alle Trombe. (Il 29 conta solo nella verzicola; il Matto in tutte). "In fine del giuoco tutte le carte contano 354, e l'ultima levata 10 di più." 60 punti formano un resto.

6. *Modo di giocare*. "Si giuoca questo giuoco in quattro persone, o in partita con l'entragnos (come usa comunemente) o in partita senza entragnos (entragnos vuol dire, che si vedono, e prendono dopo le rubate tutte le carte di conto, che si trovano nelle residue)."

7. *Modo di giocare in partita con l'entragnos*. Spiega come formare le coppie per sorteggio, alzare, rubare, distribuire le carte, usare la fola. "La prima volta, che si giuoca un palo, al faglio si dà il Rè, e non si può

³ www.associazioneletarot.it/page.aspx?id=784&lng=ITA

dare il Matto in quest'unico caso; per salvare un Re bisogna impiccarlo, cioè non giuocarlo la prima volta, che si giuoca al suo palo."

8. *Modo di contare.* "Finito il giuoco, si pongono le carte a tre per tre, cioè due, che non contano, ed una sopra di conto, e si fanno tanti di questi monticelli, quante sono le carte di conto, che si hanno. Quattordici di questi monti fanno il numero delle carte, che si avevano, cioè quarantadue, tutte le altre sono guadagnate, e quante se ne guadagnano, tante subito si segnano... Poi si conta tanto, quanto si ha di carte accusate da principio, poi tutte le verzicole, che si hanno, poi tutte le carte, l'ultima, ed i segnati, da tutto questo computo si leva il conto degli avversari, e il residuo dà la vittoria di tanti resti, quante volte il sessanta entra in detto residuo, e uno di più, se avanza qualche punto, che pur dicesi entragnos."

9. *Spiegazione dei termini proprj di questo Giuoco.* "Non penso, che siavi alcun giuoco, in cui si adoprinò termini più stravaganti di questo." "Affogare un Re, ovvero impiccare un Re, vuol dire non giuocare il Re la prima volta, che si giuoca a un palo, s'impiccano i Re per non perderli." "Morire vuol dire prendere [sta per perdere?] qualunque carta di conto." "Smattare vuol dire rispondere col Matto." Fare, giocare un tarocco non avendo più carte nel seme. Far caccia, lasciare il gioco rimandando la presa a occasione più vantaggiosa. Fare tenuta, giocare carta maggiore a quella che si vuol prendere all'avversario. "Far passata è dar tarocco geloso sopra cartiglia con pericolo." "Girare il giuoco, è giuocare da principio i tarocchi maggiori. Fumare è giuocare un papino, in segno al compagno d'aver buon giuoco, si fuma ancora con un sopraventi." Cascare, non avere più tarocchi e si possono mettere le carte scoperte in tavola per farle giocare a chi fa la presa. "Entragnos sono le carte di conto, che sono in fola, ed i punti, che avanzano, che fanno un resto. Fola sono le ultime tredici carte, che restano a monte."

10. *Leggi del Giuoco.* Legge abolita: chi non trovava niente in fola pagava un resto. Venti punti da pagare agli avversari per la prima carta sbagliata e dieci per le successive. Alla fine chi ha carte in più o in meno conta solo le verzicole accusate da principio, le carte e l'ultima. Chi rifiuta paga un resto per uno agli avversari. Le verzicole non accusate prima di giocare la prima carta non contano. "Chi casca, e mette le carte in tavola, non n'è più padrone di ripigiarle. Se nel mazzo manca qualche carta, non si rifanno le carte, né si muta mazzo, la carta per terra va in fola a monte."

11. *Giuoco di giro.* Se si capisce che la coppia ha un gioco forte si segnala al compagno giocando un papino o un sopraventi e poi si cerca di fare tutte le prese per catturare le carte gelose degli avversari.

Avvertimenti per giuocar bene

In che cosa consista il giuocar bene. "Tutte le

maniere di giuocar bene a Minchiate riduco in quattro Capi. Primo scartare. Secondo, rispondere cartiglia a cartiglia, tarocco a cartiglia, e tarocco a tarocco. Terzo, giuocare cartiglia. Quarto, giuocar tarocco, per i quali seguono dodici precetti utilissimi."

Precetti

1. "Prima d'ogni cosa, ricevute le carte, bisogna guardarsi di non dar segno alcuno della qualità di esse."

2. "*Scartare.* Si faccino fagli più, che si può. ... Si averta di scartare in quel palo, di cui ne sono meno in fola ... se poi si anno pochi Tarocchi, per sostenersi, si scarti ove ne sono più in fola."

3. "Non si dee far faglio, quando si abbiano le Trombe, e pochi Tarocchi, cioè meno di nove... Si averta di scartare in quel palo, ove se ne hanno più in mano."

4. "Tenere a memoria il numero delle carte di ciascun palo, che sono in fola, e di mano in mano, che si giuoca fare il conto quante ne restano, ed in mano di chi, per regolarsi... e questo è il più utile Precetto di questo giuoco". Molti conoscono questo precetto ma non lo mettono in pratica "siccome ricerca un'attenzione assai laboriosa".

5. "*Rispondere Cartiglia a Cartiglia.* Prima passate il Re, o impiccatelo... secondo mettete su le seconde le Regine, per fare la levata, e poi poter presto giuocare nel faglio, o scarto del compagno, se poi volete, che quello vi giuochi nel vostro, mettete le carte inferiori."

6. "*Rispondere Tarocco a Cartiglia.* ...Su le prime si passa qualunque cosa, e su le seconde ancora, su le terze si può arrischiare un papino, o altra carta di conto, ma di poca importanza; su le terze sopra Tarocco si azarda più facilmente un sopra trenta, s'avverta però, che in fola non ve ne siano più di tre."

7. "*Rispondere Tarocco a Tarocco.* Se il Tarocco vi si giuoca in faccia, cioè sotto mano, o sia dalla destra fatevi ciò che volete, e potete; se sopra mano girate al compagno; se dal compagno, quando non avete voi giuoco da far caccia, coprite per sostenere il vostro compagno, o per far tenuta a qualche carta importante."

8. Non rispondere ai commenti negativi del compagno sul gioco.

9. "*Giuocare Tarocco.* Se tocca a voi giuocare Tarocco, e avete giuoco da far caccia, fumate al compagno, acciocché vi sostenga, e poi lasciate il giuoco in mano ad altrui."

10. "*Cascare.* Non deesi cascare, quando si hanno in mano i Re affogati, finché non siano dati, se si può, nelle levate del compagno, o quando probabilmente tutti ancora abbiano cartiglia. ... Consiglio però di tenerle sino alla fine."

11. "*Valore dei Tarocchi.* Acciocché si sappia il valore de i Tarocchi, quanto voglia dire averli, o non averli

ecco la seguente tabella [riprodotta in seguito], in cui il valore della mancanza d'una sola carta di conto si esprime. Tutte insieme le carte di conto contano 354 alle quali si debbono aggiungere le verzicole da principio, e le carte vinte, e dieci dell'ultima con i segnati delle scoperte e degli ammazziati."

12. "Alla fine del giuoco se vinci, o perdi restati sempre uguale, né dar segni, o di troppa displicenza dell'uno, o di troppa allegrezza dell'altro avvenimento; e sopra tutto ricordati di essere economo dei denari vinti... Sopra tutto se hai perduto non ti affliggere, perché non v'è male di peggior nocumento, quanto l'ansietà dell'animo."

Gioco in quattro ad ogn'uno per se. Capo Terzo. Questo tipo di gioco non si usa più e l'autore propone solo quattro precetti che riassumono, con le prevedibili piccole differenze, quanto già presentato.

Notizie sull'autore

Fra i manuali stampati nel Settecento con l'intenzione di insegnare il complesso gioco delle minchiate questo è l'unico che non apparve anonimo. L'autore Francesco Saverio Brunetti era nato nel 1693 a Corinaldo, nella Marca Anconetana; venuto a Roma nel 1711 divenne appezzato insegnante e precettore, nonché cappellano pontificio di Clemente XII, Benedetto XIV e Clemente XIII; grazie alle sue attività, poté intrecciare rapporti stretti con diversi membri della più prestigiosa nobiltà romana.

I *Giuochi* del libro sono *Dedicati Alla Ill.ma, ed Ecc.ma Signora la Signora Principessa Donna Giulia Albani Chigi*. Come se non bastassero i meriti della nobile destinataria, nella prefazione il nostro autore estende gli encomi ai figli Sigismondo e Francesco e al fratello porporato Gianfrancesco, di cui ricorda la creazione a cardinale proprio in quei giorni (10 aprile 1747) e la sua personale devozione verso di lui, fin da quando era fanciullo. La carica cardinalizia era frequente nella famiglia Albani: questo Gianfrancesco era pronipote di papa Clemente XI e del cardinale Alessandro, era nipote del cardinale Annibale, e zio del cardinale Giuseppe; evidentemente, una trasmissione del seggio fra zii e nipoti poteva continuare, specialmente se la nobile famiglia risiedeva a Roma, o nei pressi.

Altre opere del medesimo autore avevano un simile intento didascalico, ma riguardavano materie più tradizionali. Non sorprendenti erano certamente i libretti di carattere religioso⁴, ma la vera "specialità" di questo maestro di nobiluomini e nobildonne romane era la matematica, nei suoi aspetti più vari e più moderni; così si possono incontrare interi libretti dedicati alla statistica e anche all'aritmetica "diadica", quella che oggi si usa nei calcolatori con le sole cifre di 0 e 1⁵. Inoltre il nostro autore si impegnò a fornire notizie aggiornate su tutta la filosofia naturale, ovvero sulle scienze fisiche che fiorivano all'epoca⁶. Troviamo anche opere scientifiche da lui scritte come Melanzio Trifiliano, accademico dell'Arcadia romana, per una collega⁷; in uno dei libretti di contenuto scientifico amplia anche la parte sul gioco degli scacchi già presente nel libro qui in esame⁸.

Tutta questa produzione si presenta particolarmente abbondante verso la metà del secolo. In mancanza di informazioni precise possiamo immaginare che fossero opere che il Brunetti considerava utili per garantirgli un migliore accesso ai vertici della società romana, e al favore dello stesso papa Benedetto XIV (il bolognese Prospero Lorenzo Lambertini, 1675-1758, papa dal 1740) patrono, insolitamente, anche delle scienze mediche e fisiche.

Il nostro autore non disdegna di occuparsi anche del gioco, a cominciare proprio dalle minchiate. "Un'opportuno trattenimento, che con piacere si costuma, è il giuoco, questo per avventura è talvolta un'adattato mezzo termine per trattenersi con giuliva applicazione nella civile conversazione, ove lo spirito impiegato in cosa di leggiere interesse, e di allegro trastullo ristora l'illanguidito vigore. ... Tra questi il giuoco delle Minchiate giudico molto a proposito a rendere plausibile la conversazione, che per esser lungo, vario, e meschiato d'azardo, e d'ingegno può insieme trattenere, dilettere, ed erudire colui, che talvolta lo giuoca." Per avvalorare la serietà del suo impegno, tuttavia, il Brunetti sottolinea l'importanza didattica per la gioventù delle *Note allegoriche* che interpone nella sua trattazione.

⁴ *Modo di assistere fruttuosamente al Santo Sacrificio della Messa ed altre orazioni cotidiane*. Roma 1735. *Notizie delle cose più importanti del calendario gregoriano dedicate alla Santità di N. Signore Clemente papa 13. felicemente regnante*. Roma 1758.

⁵ *Dell'aritmetica comune e speciosa*. Roma 1731. *Arimmetica binomica, e diadica, in cui tutte le operazioni si fanno colle sole figure uno, e zero*. Roma 1758.

⁶ *Trattenimenti scientifici su la sfera, geografia istorica, meteore, ed astronomia*. Roma 1755. *Trattenimenti scientifici su l'idrografia, nautica, blasone, statica, meccanica, architettura, pirotechnia, e suono*. Roma 1755.

⁷ *Compendio sferico, mitologo, istorico, geografico, e poetico alla nobilissima pastorella Euridice Ajacidense da Melanzio Trifiliano pastore arcade*. Roma 1755.

⁸ *Dialoghi analittici di D. Francesco Saverio Brunetti da Corinaldo...Quesiti utili, e giocondi risolti dall'Eccellentissima Signora D. Gioconda Orsini de' duchi di Gravina. Con altre piacevolezze d'ingegno su varie materie, e singolarmente sul giuoco degli scacchi*. Roma 1754.

Commenti sul libro

Per quanto riguarda il contenuto, siamo alla presenza di un libro che insegna non un gioco ma i tre giochi di società che all'epoca si potevano considerare come i più popolari nei salotti dell'alta società romana. Un'opera simile fu compilata a Londra da Edmond Hoyle, a partire dalla prima pubblicazione sul whist del 1742, e con le sue innumerevoli riedizioni diventò la bibbia dei giocatori inglesi, e anzi ebbe presto una diffusione mondiale grazie alle sue innumerevoli ristampe e traduzioni. I giocatori nei salotti romani non erano così numerosi come i gentiluomini che frequentavano i famosi club di Londra, in un'epoca in cui la rivoluzione industriale aveva portato in Inghilterra alla formazione di una classe borghese sempre più ampia e florida.

I destinatari delle opere del nostro religioso erano nobiluomini e nobildonne della corte papale, personaggi che appartenevano alla cerchia più ristretta dei patrizi romani; evidentemente la tiratura di questa edizione si rivelò sufficiente per esaudire quelle richieste, e non se ne conoscono ristampe. Tenendo anche conto della nobiltà e della cultura dei destinatari, non ci possiamo meravigliare se queste opere sono arricchite con numerose divagazioni di carattere erudito, come qui le *Note Allegoriche* che accompagnano ogni singolo capitolo del manuale.

Nel libro sui giochi preso in esame si può notare come fra i giochi di carte lo spazio riservato al gioco di ombre, cioè *hombre*, sia incomparabilmente minore di quello dedicato alle *minchiate*. Invece la parte finale sugli scacchi assume di nuovo un respiro più ampio, ma i numerosi esempi presentati di fine e inizio gioco non sono una compilazione originale ma si basano sulla letteratura tecnica che sugli scacchi stava già circolando in Italia.

C'è tuttavia un'altra particolarità che rende quest'opera unica nel suo genere: qui si avverte non solo lo sfoggio dell'erudizione classica ma anche la specifica competenza nel calcolo combinatorio, cosa che mai si incontra nei libri sulle *minchiate*. Così possiamo leggere fino dalla prefazione che nel gioco delle *minchiate* si possono verificare ben "96.141.308.410.784.017.049 casi diversi". Inoltre, verso la fine della descrizione, incontriamo la tabella seguente che ci fornisce un valore calcolato (numeri che variano da un minimo di 9 a un massimo di 55) per ogni singola carta che venisse a mancare fra quelle prese alla fine; la seconda colonna ci fornisce il valore stimato se invece insieme a quella carta mancante fosse assente anche il Matto.

Sole levano		Matto con un'altra
Matto	55	-
30	55	105
1	55	75
Trombe	50	95
Sole	50	105
Mondo	40	95
20	40	90
Luna	30	85
Stella	30	85
13	30	70
35	10	70
34	10	70
33	10	70
32	10	70
31	10	70
29	10	65
28	35	80
3	28	78
Re	15	70
10	15	70
2	14	69
4	12	67
5	9	64
Ultima	20	-

Il Brunetti ci avverte che andare oltre nel calcolo, con più carte mancanti, sarebbe assai laborioso. In questi casi l'autore ammette che si tratta di calcoli complessi, che potrebbero sminuire il piacere tipicamente collegato al gioco, e quindi rimanda ai suoi libri di matematica chi fosse interessato ad approfondire la questione. In realtà, anche consultando le altre sue opere, non è immediato risalire a questi risultati dei suoi calcoli e spesso finiamo con il supporre che siano presenti errori, o suoi o del tipografo.

Comunque, anche con le conoscenze matematiche di oggi uno studio statistico completo delle combinazioni di distribuzione e di gioco che si possono incontrare nelle *minchiate* si presenta davvero piuttosto arduo. Non è neppure facile trovare qualcuno che abbia una sufficiente conoscenza sia delle *minchiate* che della statistica; qualche risultato al riguardo può essere ottenuto rivolgendosi a Nazario Renzoni dell'Accademia dei Germini⁹.

⁹ germini.altervista.org/

Esemplari conservati

Come è stato fatto per gli altri libri sul gioco delle minchiate, anche per questo è stata condotta una ricerca sugli esemplari conservati nelle varie biblioteche pubbliche a giro per il mondo, elencati nella seguente tabella.

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma	Roma
Biblioteca Casanatense	Roma
Biblioteca Nazionale	Napoli
Biblioteca Civica	Cosenza
Biblioteca Oliveriana	Pesaro
Istituto Campana	Osimo (An)
Biblioteca Provinciale	Salerno
Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria	Torino
Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana	Vicenza
Biblioteca Vaticana (Stamp.Chig.V.2606)	Città del Vaticano
Biblioteca Vaticana (Stamp.Chig.V.3279)	Città del Vaticano
Universität Mozarteum	Salzburg, Austria
Bibliothèque Nationale de France	Paris, France
The British Library, St. Pancras	London, UK
Bodleian Library, Oxford University	Oxford, UK
University of London, Warburg Institute	London, UK
British Museum Library	London, UK
Biblioteca Nacional de España	Madrid, Spain
Koninklijke Bibliotheek	Den Haag, Netherlands
Maastricht University Library	Maastricht, Netherlands
Erasmus University Rotterdam	Rotterdam, Netherlands
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam Library	Amsterdam, Netherlands
The National & University Library of Iceland	Reykjavik, Iceland
Pierpont Morgan Library	New York, NY USA
New York Public Library	New York, NY USA
Library of Congress	Washington, DC USA
Cleveland Public Library	Cleveland, OH USA

University of Wisconsin	Madison, WI USA
University of Louisville	Louisville, KY USA
Colorado College	Colorado Springs, CO USA
Vanderbilt University Library	Nashville, TN USA

Le copie del libro in esame conservate in Italia non sono molte; comprensibilmente se ne incontrano in particolare nel territorio che apparteneva allo Stato della Chiesa. La ricordata destinazione "alta" di questo libro lo fece evidentemente apprezzare anche ai gentiluomini stranieri che in quegli anni visitarono numerosi l'Italia, salotti romani compresi, ed è plausibilmente anche grazie a loro se un numero consistente di copie si trova ancora presente in numerose biblioteche all'estero, inaspettatamente più che in Italia.

Non è quindi troppo sorprendente constatare la presenza di un esemplare nelle principali capitali europee, ma abbastanza inattesa è la quantità delle copie conservate negli USA. Una possibile spiegazione si può far risalire non alla descrizione del gioco delle minchiate ma a quella degli scacchi, che più e prima degli altri giochi ha incontrato l'interesse dei bibliofili (non sembra casuale che per Cleveland e L'Aia si tratti delle due maggiori biblioteche scacchistiche a livello mondiale).

Nel complesso, si può concludere che nessun'altra edizione sul gioco delle minchiate è stata custodita in maniera allo stesso tempo così abbondante e così dispersa nei continenti europeo e nord-americano; forse l'unica confrontabile, sia pure restando su un gradino inferiore, è l'edizione delle *Regole generali* ristampata a Firenze nel 1820 (anche in quel caso una frazione consistente degli esemplari risulta conservata negli USA, e in quel libro di scacchi non se ne parla).

Page filler - from page 69 of the *Minchiate* book above.



Reconstructing the Early Italian Game of Tarot

Written by Ben Steel

The present article seeks to reconstruct the early Italian game of Tarot, insofar as we are able to do so, in order to help shed light on the earliest stages of the Tarot's development. Due to the lack of definitive sources in this area of inquiry, our reconstruction will necessarily entail some logical speculation. Some of the ideas I propose for consideration are admittedly more speculative than others; however, I hope to illustrate both the evidentiary and logical reasoning for my positions, as well as addressing some of the more likely objections. This article is not intended to delimit the early game of Tarot, so much as it meant to put forward some additional ideas for consideration. With that in mind, let us see if we can reach into the distant past and draw forth the earliest elements of one of the world's most intriguing card games – the Tarot.

Reconstructions and Assumptions

There were four major centers of Tarot activity in 15th century Italy: Florence, Bologna, Ferrara, and Milan (see figure 1).¹ Unfortunately, there are no written accounts of the rules for the game of Tarot prior to the 16th century and they did not begin to appear with any frequency in Italy until the 18th century.² As a result, any discussion of the early Italian game of Tarot must necessarily rely on reconstruction and extrapolation, and even then, it is not always possible to do so with any certainty. For instance, the only indication we have of how the early Ferrarese game was played comes from the *Invettiva* of Alberto Lollio and the corresponding *Risposta* from Vincenzo Imperiali³

and here we should note that the description given assumes a great deal of pre-existing knowledge on behalf of the reader, prompting Dummett to remark that "neither writer explains the game, but takes for granted that his reader will know how it is played."⁴ A description of Lollio and Imperiali's account can be found in chapter 10 of *The Games Played with the Tarot Pack, Vol. I* by Dummett and McLeod, but as will become evident, that description does not correspond with the original rules of the game insofar as the point structure and computation is concerned.

Likewise, there is also no indication of how the game was played with the 78-card pack in Florence. There



Figure 1. The four major regions of Tarot activity in the Quattrocento.

¹ Depaulis, Thierry. "Early Italian Lists of Tarot Trumps." *The Playing-Card* 36(1), 2010, p. 39.

² Dummett, Michael and John, McLeod. *A History of Games Played with the Tarot Pack, Vol. I*, Edwin Mellen Press, 2004, p. 13.

³ See Berti, Giordano and Vitali, Andrea (Eds). *I tarocchi: Le carte di corte: gioco e magia alla corte degli estensi*, 1987, no. 45, p. 113..

⁴ Dummett & McLeod, op cit., p. 250.

is a 1676 reference in which Paolo Minucci gives some indication of the rules for Minchiate,⁵ a pack that we know to be an adaptation of the 78-card Florentine pack;⁶ however, the variant nature of both the pack and the game of Minchiate hinder any extrapolation. In Bologna, rules for the game did not appear in any literary reference until the 18th century,⁷ although “the extreme conservatism of Bolognese players”⁸ makes it very likely that those rules go all the way back to the beginning of the game in that region. There is a similar lack of evidence regarding the rules of play in Milan; however, since the Tarot is thought to have entered France via Milan,⁹ it may be possible to deduce some idea of the Milanese rules by examining the French rules for the game. The Tarot, or *Tarax*, was known in Avignon as early as 1505 and possibly even earlier in Lyon,¹⁰ suggesting a possible diffusion from Italy to France in the late 15th century. The earliest account of the rules for French Tarot are to be found c. 1637 in the *Règle du Jeu des Tarots* (RT), published in Nevers by the *abbé* Michel de Marolles (1600-1681).¹¹

In the absence of any fully explanatory account of the game of Tarot in the 15th and 16th centuries, the only means by which we can intelligently discuss that game is via a reconstruction of it, but in light of the foregoing, this route is fraught with challenges. We have already noted the difficulty inherent with Lollo and Imperiali’s description of the Ferrarese game. In Milan, we are forced to utilize the rules from an entirely different country, trusting that the one is an accurate reflection of the other. There is a similar difficulty in using the Florentine Minchiate as a source, since both the rules and the structure of that variant pack differ a great deal from the known rules and composition of the standard Tarot (i.e. the 78-card Tarot). The region presenting the least amount of difficulty is Bologna, where “there is every indication that Bolognese players are extremely conservative: neither the rules of the game nor the design of the standard pattern peculiar to Bologna can have altered greatly over the centuries.”¹² Even here, we must bear

in mind that all of the rules for the Bolognese game available to us make use of the shortened pack, potentially hampering any correlation we might make with the original game and its standard pack. Thankfully, Michael Dummett utilized his vast expertise and familiarity with the panoply of different Tarot games to complete most of this reconstruction for us, arriving at a distillation of the most likely components of the original game. It is for this reason that I have referenced him so often in this article.

Before moving on to examine the “original method”, as Dummett terms it, we need to ascertain the most likely number of players in the original game as this will have a direct correlation on our developing thesis. One important piece of information in this regard comes from the Ferrarese Jurist, Ugo Trotti. In the *Tractatus de multiplici ludo* of 1426, Trotti mentions that the game was played by four people;¹³ however, there are later accounts which cite just three players. For example, the 16th century anonymous *Discorso*, likely referencing the Ferrarese tradition, cites three players for the game.¹⁴ Additionally, Vincenzo Imperiali’s *Risposta* to Alberto Lollio’s *Invettiva* also cites just three players.¹⁵

Since we are presently interested in reconstructing the **original** game, it seems logical to utilize the earlier Trotti reference to four players as representative of the early game in Ferrara, noting that it very likely changed to a three-player game sometime in the 16th century. In a similar vein, Dummett points out that both the Minchiate and the Bolognese Tarocchino were four-handed games with fixed partnerships.¹⁶ In the absence of any reference to the game played with the 78-card pack in Florence, we can logically assume that the number of players was the same as that of Bologna and the Minchiate, since all three adhered to the same order, Dummett’s order A.¹⁷ In fact, the only possible exception to a four-handed Tarot game in the 15th century is Milan and this is based upon the rules for the French game given in RT, rather than any Italian source.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 324.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 319.

⁷ The first published rules for the Tarocchino are found in Raffaele Bisteghi’s card-game book, *Il Giuoco Practico*, published in Bologna in 1753. See Dummett & McLeod, *op cit.*, p. 325.

⁸ Dummett, Michael. *The Game of Tarot*. Duckworth, 1980, p. 419.

⁹ Depaulis, Thierry. “The Tarot De Marseilles - Facts and Fallacies, Part II.” *The Playing-Card* 42(2), 2013, p. 119.

¹⁰ See Depaulis, Thierry. “Des cartes Communément Appelées Tarax: 2ème Partie.” *The Playing-Card*, 32(6), 2005, pp. 244-49 and Depaulis, Thierry. “Des cartes Communément Appelées Tarax.” *The Playing-Card*, 32(5), 2004, pp. 199-205.

¹¹ Depaulis, Thierry. “Quand L’Abbé De Marolles Jouait Au Tarot.” *Le Vieux Papier, Fascicule* 65, 2002, pp. 13-26.

¹² Dummett & McLeod, *op cit.*, p. 257.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 248.

¹⁴ Caldwell, Ross, Thierry Depaulis, and Marco Ponzi. *Con Gli Occhi et con L’Intelletto: Explaining the Tarot in 16th Century Italy*. Lulu.com, 2018, p. 45.

¹⁵ Zorli, Girolamo. “A Tarocchino Terziglio in 1550 Ferrara.” *The Playing-Card*, 39(2), 2007, p. 84.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 328.

¹⁷ Dummett, *op cit.*, p. 399.

This focus on the number of players in the early Italian game is important insofar as "the principal point of distinction between the different local traditions of play is the number of counting cards."¹⁸ We have no knowledge of the number of counting cards in the trump suit for Ferrara or for the 78-card pack in Florence. The Minchiate variant admits twenty counting cards, exactly half the number of cards in the trump suit, while only the King retains any point values within the court.¹⁹ Since the Minchiate varies so radically from other Tarot games in its selection of counting cards, we may safely set it aside and turn the remainder of our attention to Bologna and Milan. The Bolognese tradition admits four counting cards from the trump suit,²⁰ while Milan presumably had only three. The number of Milanese counting cards in the trump suit is based on the fact that in almost all Tarot games played outside of Italy, there are only three designated counting cards within the trump suit: trump XXI, trump I, and the *matto*.²¹ Since Dummett cites Milan as the ultimate source for the Tarot outside of Italy, we may assume that Milan also designated just three counting cards within the trump suit.

In determination of the number of counting cards in the trump suit, we are forced to choose between Bologna and Milan as representative of the original Italian game. The most logical choice regarding the number of counting cards in the trump suit of the early Italian Tarot resides within the Bolognese tradition. Not only is Bologna widely recognized for its adherence to tradition, but it is also an A-type order along with Florence, which is gradually revealing itself to be the original sequencing system of the Tarot.²² Bologna's staunch traditionalism and observance of order A makes it a much more likely candidate for the preservation of the original features of the game than Milan, an area that appears more representative of the game outside of Italy than within it.

A possible objection to the adoption of four counting cards in the early Italian game of Tarot lies in the rarity of card games where more than one top trump has a value. In fact, this feature appears to be isolated to the game of Germini/Minchiate and to the regions of Sicily and Bologna, where the former two assign values to their top five trump cards,²³ while the latter assigns a value to its two top trump cards.²⁴ This is

certainly a consideration to bear in mind; however, it may be somewhat mitigated by noting that the Tarot was the **first** game to utilize a permanent fifth suit of trump cards and that the regions we are citing as exceptions are exactly those that adhere to what is likely the **original** sequence of the trump suit – Dummett's order A.²⁵ Due to the novelty of this situation, any extrapolations made from comparisons with later packs and/or their rules and configurations should be treated with caution. We may certainly say that a certain percentage of games adhere to a given rule or a specific configuration, but it does not necessarily follow that this state of affairs was the same for the **originating** game. It may have been, but it is as equally likely that it may not have been, especially if there is reason to think otherwise. In this instance, I think there are at least a few reasons to question this assumption.

Firstly, even if we could point to older, related trick-taking games for comparison, the mere presence of the Tarot's novel fifth suit limits the utility of that appraisal. Second, we have already noted that all three of the exceptions given above adhere to the same sequencing system: Dummett's order A. Although conclusive evidence is lacking, I feel that the preponderance of the evidence that is available to us points towards order A as the original sequence of the Tarot.²⁶ As a result, I find it significant that all of the games that assign a value to more than one top trump all adhere to the originating order, which makes me think that this shared feature may be a vestige of the original game. Finally, it is difficult not to see Bologna as the last bastion of some of the Tarot's (potentially) original features given its comparatively staunch traditionalism and adherence to order A. I hope to have shown that there is a reasonable basis on which to assert the initial condition of four counting cards, while also acknowledging the possibility that it may have been otherwise.

The "Original Standard Values"

The Tarot is a "point-trick" game. Thus, the object is not to capture as many tricks as possible, but to capture as many point-cards as possible. Those cards that carry a point-value are known as counting cards, while cards devoid of any point-value are considered "empty" cards. In what Dummett calls, "the original

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 420.

¹⁹ Dummett & McLeod, *op cit.*, p. 328.

²⁰ Dummett, *op cit.*, p. 420.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 419.

²² For an overview of some of the more pertinent research in this area, see Pratesi, Franco. *IPCS Papers #7: Playing Card Trade in 15th-Century Florence*, 2012 and Caldwell, Ross. "Giovanni Del Ponte and the Dating of the Rothschild Cards in the Louvre: Some Further Considerations." *The Playing-Card*, 36(1), 2007, pp. 51-62.

²³ See Dummett & McLeod, *op cit.*, p. 330 & p. 377.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 264.

²⁵ See footnote 22.

²⁶ See footnote 22.

Suit Position	Batons	Coins	Cups	Swords	Trumps
Highest Card	King	King	King	King	World or Angel
2 nd Highest Card	Queen	Queen	Queen	Queen	Angel or World
2 nd Lowest Card	Knight	Knight	Knight	Knight	<i>bagatto</i>
Lowest Card	Jack	Jack	Jack	Jack	<i>matto</i>

Table 1: The counting cards of all five suits may have consisted of the same general selection criteria.

standard values;²⁷ the court cards constitute the counting cards of the regular pack and their values are tallied as 4 points for each King, 3 points for each Queen, 2 points for each Knight, and 1 point for each Jack.

Assuming a four-handed game with four counting cards, we can make some interesting observations regarding the manner by which the counting cards of the trump suit and those of the regular pack may have been selected. Consider the regular pack in isolation for a moment; the court cards are visually distinguished by virtue of bearing a symbolic depiction of a human visage (the King, Queen, Cavalier, or Jack) as opposed to the repeating geometrical patterns of the pip cards. As a result, the court cards are frequently referred to as “face cards” in acknowledgment of their symbolic differentiation from the pips. They behave almost like a suit within a suit, being symbolically and sometimes functionally separate from the pips yet connected by virtue of belonging to the same suit (see figure 2).

It is therefore potentially significant that the counting cards of the regular pack were confined to the court.

Looking at table 1, we can see that the counting cards of all five suits (the four suits of the regular pack and the fifth suit of trump cards) were located solely within those cards of a symbolic nature, by which I mean those cards displaying something **other** than the repeating geometrical patterns of the pip cards. If we treat the court cards as a kind of “suit-within-a-suit” we can say that all of the counting cards are reckoned as the two highest and the two lowest cards of each suit, noting the confinement of this selection to the court cards of the regular pack. This is admittedly somewhat speculative; however, because it remains within the realm of possibility and because it contributes to a larger and more interesting supposition, it is worth exploring.

It may be objected that the *matto* was not considered a trump card proper, especially since it had no trick-taking power of its own.²⁸ While I certainly acknowledge this point, I think it overlooks the fact that the *matto* was still a card of the trump suit. In support of this, I would like to highlight a phrase from the 18th century set of rules for the Bolognese game, the *Spiegazione del Giuco del Tarochino*, penned by



Figure 2. Compare the repeating suit-signs of the pip cards (the 3 and 6) to the presence of human figures in the court cards (the Knight and King) in the suit of Batons of the Brera-Brambilla Tarot, Milan, c. 1444. Facsimile reconstruction by Il Meneghello.

²⁷ Dummett & McLeod, *op cit.*, p. 7.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5

Vincenzo Pedini circa 1746, but very likely copied from an earlier manuscript dated towards the end of the 16th century.²⁹ When Pedini began to explain the role of the *matto*, he made the explicit statement “*il matto ancorchè sia annoverato trà trionfi...*” (“The Fool, even though he is counted among the trumps...”) and then proceeded to describe his function as the excuse. Additionally, the Steele Sermon, although listing the *matto* last, still counted the card among the trumps.³⁰ Finally, the Bolognese collectively termed the counting cards of the trump suit *tarocchi*, while the remainder of the trumps were called *trionfi* at first and then later by the name of *numeri*.³¹ Since the *matto* was included in this designated set of counting cards, and in light of the foregoing discussion, I see no reason why the *matto* may not be seen as the “lowest” card of the trump suit, albeit not ranked, when in consideration of the **structural and constitutive elements** of the game, as opposed to its **role** in the game.

In addition to the aforementioned similarity in the selection of counting cards between the regular pack and the trump suit, we may also note a parallel in the determination of the allotted points for the counting cards. The King, the top-ranking figure of the court cards, was allotted the highest allowable number of points – four. Each of the court cards below it decreased in value by a single point, relative to their sequential position below the King. The cards of the trump suit are unique in that even the lowest of the “official” trump cards (the *bagatto*) outranks the King, and since four points appears to be the maximum allotted point value for a counting card in the original point computation, the four counting cards of the trump suit all carried the highest allowable point-value of four points. Furthermore, table 2 illustrates

	Kings	Queens	Knights	Jacks	Trumps	Deck Total
Point Value	4	3	2	1	4	14
# of Cards	4	4	4	4	4	20
Total Points	16	12	8	4	16	56

Table 2: The total number of points for all the counting cards is the same as the total number of cards within the regular pack.

that if we tally the total number of points for all of the counting cards, we find that the total is exactly equivalent to the total number of cards in the regular pack. This apparent symmetry is intriguing, but before we attempt any analysis, let us first examine the major features of the original game of Tarot.

The Three Features of the Original Game

Michael Dummett noted three distinctive features, which all appear to have been part of the original game: a simplistic point allocation system, a score for taking the last trick, and the discard.

1) The Simplified Scoring System. Dummett maintained that the original game employed a highly simplified methodology for computing points, which he took to have been one point for each trick, noting that the counting cards were reckoned separately.³² I will add that it is possible that this simplified methodology was used in conjunction with **all** score-contributing elements of the game, so that anything which carried a point-value in the original game, aside from the counting cards, was allotted just a single point.

2) A Score for the Final Trick. The second feature of the original game was a score for taking the last trick, which Dummett indicates “was an original feature of the game, independent of the number of players.”³³ Even if we look at only those packs associated with order A, we still find at least three different point allocations awarded for taking the last trick: in Bologna it was 6;³⁴ in Sicily it was 5; and in the Minchiate it was 10. Given the relative simplicity of both the point structure and its computation in the original game, juxtaposed against the vastly more complex rules of the later game and the differing number of points awarded to the final trick, it may be that the original computation was, as for the rest of the score contributing elements, also more simplified. Even if we acknowledge this, it remains true that the final trick was singled out as something significant, resulting in the allotment of a greater number of points for its capture. Since each trick was allotted just a single

point, it is reasonable to assume that the final trick was allotted additional points beyond its normal value. The obvious question is how many points it was allotted. Although I am inclined to believe that only one additional point was allotted to the capture of the final trick originally, it may be argued

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 266-269. See also Pedini, Vincenzo. “Spiegazione Del Giuoco Del Tarochino.” *Collocazione: Ms., Gozzadini, 140 Miscellanea Pedini, tomo I, cc. 40v-55r, Secolo XVIII*. Available to view at bit.ly/2k2XVHD.

³⁰ Decker, Ronald. “The Steele Manuscript.” *The Playing-Card*, 17(3), 1989, pp. 73-77.

³¹ Dummett & McCloud, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-261 and p. 264.

³² Dummett, *op cit.*, p. 427.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 429.

³⁴ Dummett & McLeod, *op cit.*, p. 264.

that such a small point value would not provide any useful incentive to players. Furthermore, it might be objected that no extant card game bears a bonus value so small in comparison with the total number of points in play. These are valid arguments, which I would like to place in context.

We can follow Dummett in noting that “Tarocchi, Minchiate and Sicilian Tarocchi also all have a feature presumably absent from the Milanese game, since scarcely a trace of it is found in any Tarot game played outside Italy: a fixed score in points for winning the last trick.”³⁵ Even though this feature is present in a number of different card games played with the regular pack, “no Italian Tarot game which we know to have been uninfluenced by foreign modes of play has a vestige of that idea which became so characteristic an element of Tarot games as played elsewhere, the special bonus for winning the last trick with the *Bagatto*.”³⁶

Dummett’s two insights are of direct relevance here. For Tarot games in which points are awarded for winning the final trick in a **specified manner**, such as the use of the *bagatto* to do so, the idea of incentivizing this capture makes sense. If, however, we consider the capture of the final trick in

later games compared to the original, any comparison between the two is potentially hindered. In light of the foregoing discussion, I think we have a reasonable, although certainly not conclusive, basis for assigning just a single additional point to the capture of the final trick in our reconstruction of the original game of Tarot.

3) The Discard. The third feature was the discard, which Dummett informs us, “seems overwhelmingly probable... as one going back to an early stage in the history of the Tarot games.”³⁷ Within a 78-card deal, in which all the cards are evenly dealt out to four players, each player receives nineteen cards, leaving exactly two cards left over for the discard. Maintaining the original method of assigning a single point to each score-contributing element of the game, it is likely that the discard also carried just a single point.

Keeping these three features in mind, we can make some curious observations between the point structure of the original game and the constitution of the Tarot pack. Looking at the total game points (i.e. all points **other** than those of the counting cards), we can see that their total value is equivalent to one less than the total number of cards in the Tarot’s trump suit (see table 3). It may appear that the situation

	Tricks Taken	Discard	Final Trick	Total Points
Number of Cards	19	2	4	
Point Value	1	1	1	
Total Points	19	1	1	21

Table 3: The combined game-points total exactly one less than the total number of cards in the Tarot’s trump suit (21 out of 22 cards).

a **generic sense**, then the idea of an incentive for its capture is less critical. Indeed, it may have been simply the proverbial “cherry on top” to win the final trick and to garner an additional point in doing so. We can speculate that as the game spread and continued to develop, the idea of incentivizing the capture of the final trick occurred to people both on and off the peninsula, which would explain the foreign development of the special bonus for winning the last trick with the *bagatto* and its absence from indigenous decks, as it were. As to the bonus value being small in comparison with the total number of points in play, we should note that any comparisons made with games played with the regular pack may be of the apple and oranges variety, since we would be essentially comparing Tarot games to non-Tarot games. Additionally, since the point structure and its method of computation appear to be significantly more complicated in

would be far more intriguing if the total points exactly matched the number of cards in the trump suit, especially considering that the total points for the counting cards was exactly equivalent to the number of cards in the regular pack. There is, however, an explanation that potentially accounts for this 1 point difference and it centers on the figure of the *matto*.

Earlier, we highlighted the fact that although the *matto* is not technically considered a trump card in the proper sense, its presence in the trump suit allowed it to function as one of the counting cards of that suit. It is only when we are examining the game points apart from the counting cards that the unique role of the *matto* as a trump-that-is-not-a-trump comes to bear. If we take this aspect of the *matto* into account, we may speculate that the total number of game points (21) did, in fact, equal the number of cards in the trump suit. It simply reflected the to-

³⁵ Dummett, *op cit.*, p. 420.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

tal number of **proper** trump cards, setting aside the unique figure of the *matto*, the trump-card-that-isn't.

There is one additional consideration that may also account for the total of 21 game points. The trump sequence, as given in order A, appears to be constitutive of a moral allegory of spiritual ascent, grounded in the milieu of 15th century Northern Italy.³⁸ The nature of that allegory parallels the familiar, 15th century theme of the fallen state of man and his gradual redemption and transformation in Christ.³⁹ Although the idea of the Tarot as the so-called Fool's Journey is something of a modern notion, the idea is not nearly as absurd as it may at first appear. For instance, Vitali maintains that the word *tarocco*, which came to replace the earlier term of "*ludus triumphorum*" in the early 16th century as a designation for the Tarot pack, is directly derived from the card of the Fool.⁴⁰ He goes on to make the following claim:

*"In the tarot the presence of the Madman/Fool has therefore a further and deeper sense: the Fool, in so far as he possessed the power to reason but did not believe through reason, had to become, not only the simple believer who did not need intellectual argument for what he felt in his heart, but also, through the teachings of the Mystical Staircase, the 'Fool of God', as happened to Francis, the most popular saint, who was called 'The Holy Minstrel of God' and 'The Holy Fool [Folle] of God'."*⁴¹

I tend to agree with Vitali's assessment regarding the role of the Fool in the Tarot's allegory. As a result, I find it reasonable to conclude that the Tarot, which may even have been later renamed for the Fool card, is indeed a depiction of the Fool's Journey. If we proceed on this assumption, then it likewise makes sense that the Fool is afforded a unique role in the trump suit and is not considered to be among the trumps proper. There is thus some intersection between the design of the Tarot pack, the rules of the

	Counting Cards	Game Points	Total Points
Point Value	56	21	77

Table 4: The combined point values of the counting cards and game points is equal to one less than the total number of cards in the Tarot pack.

game, and the allegory of the trump suit. This may be why the total number of game points is precisely one less than the number of cards in the trump suit; it accounts for the unique role of the *matto* as an outsider in the trump suit and as the subject of its allegory. This may be the same reason why the tally of the total game points, together with the points for all the counting cards, is exactly one less than the number of cards in the entire pack – 77 (see table 4). What are we to make of this situation? Did the designer(s) of the Tarot construct both the pack and the rules for the game it facilitated in such a way as to intentionally parallel the trump suit's allegory and to achieve some manner of symmetry between the two? If we take all of the foregoing assumptions as representative of the original game of Tarot, then I think a strong, but inconclusive case can be made for it and even Michael Dummett pointed out that this sort of thematic symmetry "strikes me as just the sort of conceit that would appeal to men and women of Renaissance times."⁴² If the Tarot did partake in this "Renaissance conceit" it exhibited some degree of symmetry and interrelation between the selection of the trump themes, the design choices and configuration of the pack, and the rules of the original game. In consideration of Tarot's allegory, it seems reasonable to conclude that the constitution of the trump suit was set as precisely 21 trump cards and the *matto* from the very beginning. By extension then, any early pack of a different constitution, and not being a known variant of the 78-card pack, would not qualify as a Tarot pack since our hypothesis rules out any gradual development of the Tarot's trump suit.

³⁸ See Depaulis, Thierry. *Le Tarot révélé*. Musée Suisse du Jeu, 2013, p. 69.

³⁹ See the many essays of Andrea Vitali at the *Le Tarot Cultural Association*, located at www.associazionetarot.it/page.aspx?id=5&lng=ENG.

⁴⁰ Vitali, Andrea. "The History of the Tarot: From its Origin to the Present Day." An essay at the *Le Tarot Cultural Association*, 2004, located at www.associazionetarot.it/page.aspx?id=111 and translated by Michael Howard, 2012.

⁴¹ Vitali, Andrea. "The Madman (The Fool)", 1995, *op cit.*, www.associazionetarot.it/page.aspx?id=112.

⁴² Dummett, *op cit.*, p. 426.

New Issues

Some new packs reviewed for you

Name Before tarot

Designed by Pietro Alligo, an Italian artist. The artwork has been made by Eon & Simona Rossi.

Description Following the success of the New Vision Tarot and the After Tarot, the Before Tarot ("one moment before") shows the scenes that take place immediately before the images rendered in the Rider-Waite-Smith tarot. As a reminder, the After Tarot (2016) shows the scenes some time later and the New Vision Tarot (2003) shows the scenes from behind the main characters. In my opinion, all three tarots can be considered as a fine parody of the tarot designed by Pamela Colman-Smith. This is a trilogy but illustrated by different artists so the style

may differ slightly between the different packs. A 160-pages guidebook, titled "Foresight: a guide to the Before Tarot," is joined to the 78 cards. This tarot is a nice addition but the guidebook may be confusing as it has pictures of all 3 decks in it.

Published by Lo Scarabeo (shop.loscarabeo.com)

Published in 2018

Price 21 € (on the publisher's web site).

Reviewed by Christian de Ryck

Name Virginie Houdet

Designed by Virginie Houdet, a French artist

(www.virginiehoudet.com).

Description Virginie Houdet decided a few years





ago to paint a pack of cards after a visit to the *île des impressionistes* in Chatou, near Paris. She learned how to play with colors according to Paul Klee's method. All cards were painted with watercolor and Indian ink. All pip cards are different even if they look alike. The figures were inspired by Tuscan masks. The indices are bilingual: English at one end, French at the other end. This pack has two jokers, a title card and a 56th card with sentences like "as a child, I watched my grandfathers, one playing cards, the other painting. I like to do both..."

Printed by Carta Mundi (France).

Published by the artist. This is a limited and numbered edition of only 250 packs.

Published in 2017

Price 20 € on the artist's web site. I bought one for the same price a few weeks ago in the Musée Français de la Carte à Jouer (Issy-les-Moulineaux, near Paris).

Reviewed by Christian de Ryck

Name Tarot Astérix

Designed by Albert Uderzo (1927–2020), a French



comic book artist and scriptwriter. He is best known as the co-creator and illustrator of the *Astérix* series in collaboration with René Goscinny.

Description The first edition of this tarot aimed to young players was reviewed in 1998 in *The Playing-Card* 26#6. It has been published in 1997 by France Cartes and only the 22 trumps have been redesigned. All sixteen figures have kept the standard pattern for the Tarot Nouveau by Ducale. A second edition has been published recently by Carta Mundi and 21 trump cards have been redesigned with new scenes from the famous *Asterix* comic books. The excuse (Fool) is the same Cacophonix. I hope this small change in the pack design was worth this short review.

Printed by Carta Mundi (France).

Published by Carta Mundi (France) under its brand name Shuffle. This brand is dedicated to licensed games for children. Note that in their web site, the *Asterix* packs can be viewed only if the chosen language is French (shufflecardgames.com/fr_fr/license/asterix). Other games under the same license are a 7 families and a memory game.

This pack is co-published by Éditions Albert René, a French publishing house created in 1979 by cartoonist Albert Uderzo to control the publication of the *Astérix* series, owned by Hachette Livre since 2011.

Published in 2019

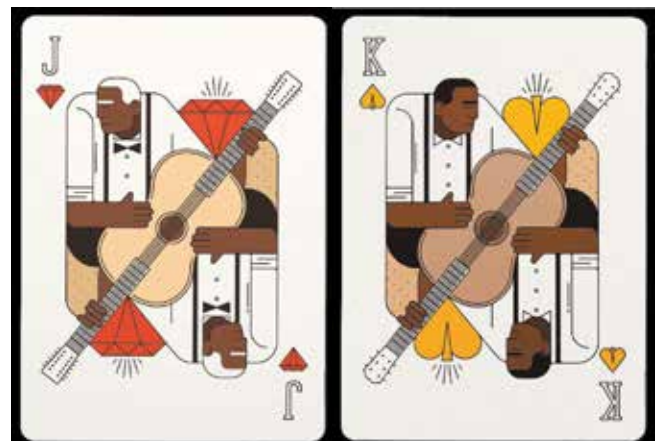
Price 10 to 15 €. The official rules of the French Tarot is joined with the cards. An extra card reminds us of the value of the cards and there is also a title card. The first edition is now hard to find and a pack in good condition can be sold for up to 25 €.

Reviewed by Christian de Ryck

Name The last fair deal

Designed by Pat Sofra, an Australian graphic designer and occasionally a blues guitarist from Melbourne.

Description This pack of 56 cards is first an homage to The Blues pioneers such as Leadbelly, Son House, Sister Rosetta & Memphis Minnie. The cards are dedicated to the founding mothers and fathers of not just blues, but rock and pop music as well.



The title comes from the song "Last Fair Deal Gone Down" by Robert Johnson and recorded in 1936. Some cards can be seen on the artist's web portfolio (patsofra.myportfolio.com). Note that the pip cards have been redesigned with special pip arrangements. The joker is "the devil" (a bottle of Bootleg liquor or Moonshine).

Printed by United States Playing Card Company.

Published by Pat Sofra.

Published in 2020

Price AU\$ 30 (during the crowdfunding campaign).

Reviewed by Christian de Ryck

Name Once Upon a Time

Designed by Elaine Lewis.

Description For her 2020 transformation pack, Elaine Lewis has chosen children's fairy tales as the theme. The name derives from the familiar and traditional opening line that parents would start with when reading or telling a story. As always with Elaine Lewis's work, the illustrations are exquisitely drawn and meticulously hand-coloured using a full spectrum of hues and strictly adhering to the true transformation principles of old. The fairy stories illustrated on the cards include: Cinderella, Rapunzel, The Little Mermaid, Snow White, Puss in Boots



and many others. Some of the cards are linked to complete the illustration. The court cards illustrate double-ended, some reversible and some not, Kings, Queens and Knaves with lines from nursery rhymes. This is a beautiful pack that will please all collectors but particularly those interested in transformation packs. There are 52 suit cards + 1 Joker and a title card

Printed by the artist on card with a foil back and in a box, in a limited edition of 50.

Published in 2020

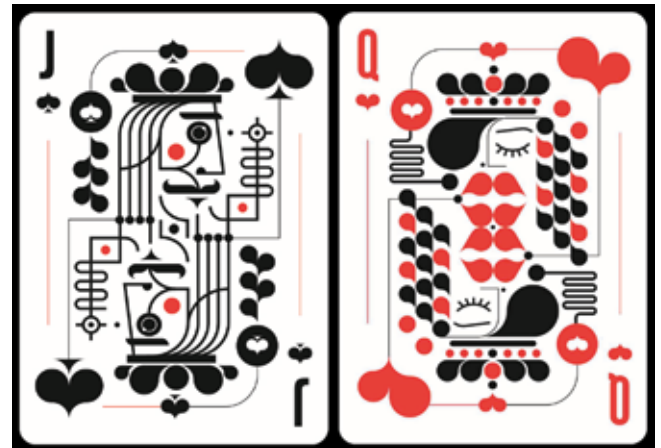
Price in the UK is £120 + £7.50 p&p: those not resident in the UK should contact Barney Townshend (barneyt@btinternet.com) for the cost of postage to their homeland.

Reviewed by Mike Cooper

Name Messymod Playing Cards

Designed by TRÜF, an American design studio founded in 2006 by Adam Goldberg and Monika Kehrner (trufcreative.com).

Description Messymod is short for "Messy Modernism". This pack of 54 cards with a minimal, abstract and stylized design is a collaboration between Art of Play and TRÜF. The designers get inspired by the Bauhaus with use of geometric pattern and white space. They are so proud of their artworks that it is possible to buy a signed fine art print, bundled or not with a pack of cards.



Printed by U. S. Playing Card Co.

Published by Art of Play (www.artofplay.com)

Published in 2019

Price US\$ 12 for a pack, US\$ 65 for a pack of cards with a signed print of one card, US\$ 150 for a signed large print of one card. All items can be bought from www.messymod.com.

Reviewed by Christian de Ryck

Name Carnaval de Venecia

Designed by Fernando Corella (corelladibujo.com), a well-known artist who had illustrated many packs of cards for ASESOCOIN.

Description This pack of 40 cards has been chosen in 2019 during the annual general meeting of



ASESCOIN. It is nicely inspired by the Carnival of Venice. I guess the Spanish association had anticipated everybody has to wear a mask but in this pack, of course, the masks are different. There are also two jokers and a numbered title card. The suit signs are the traditional ones except the wand which has been replaced by the marotte.

Printed by Liceo Gráfico (liceografico.com).

600 packs have been printed.

Published by ASESCOIN (asescoin@yahoo.es)

Published in 2020

Price 10 € (from ASESCOIN).

Reviewed by Christian de Ryck

Name Two tarots by Taylor Hultquist-Todd

Designed by Taylor Hultquist-Todd, an illustrator based in Philadelphia (taylorbryn.com).

Description I know there are plenty of cat and dog tarots. Anyway, here are another two which I think are nicely drawn. They both follow the Rider-Waite-Smith pattern. This pattern had allowed the artist to illustrate all 78 cards with pen and ink. Instead of colour, she relies on a combination of loose washes and tight cross-hatching to create textures and depth. The first pack, the dog tarot also named "Canes Arcanae" has been designed last year and a second edition, without the white border, is in preparation. The second one "Faeles Arcanae" will be available soon. Both were produced with the help of



successful crowdfunding campaigns.

Printed by MPC (www.makeplayingcards.com).

The cards are printed with gilded silver edges.

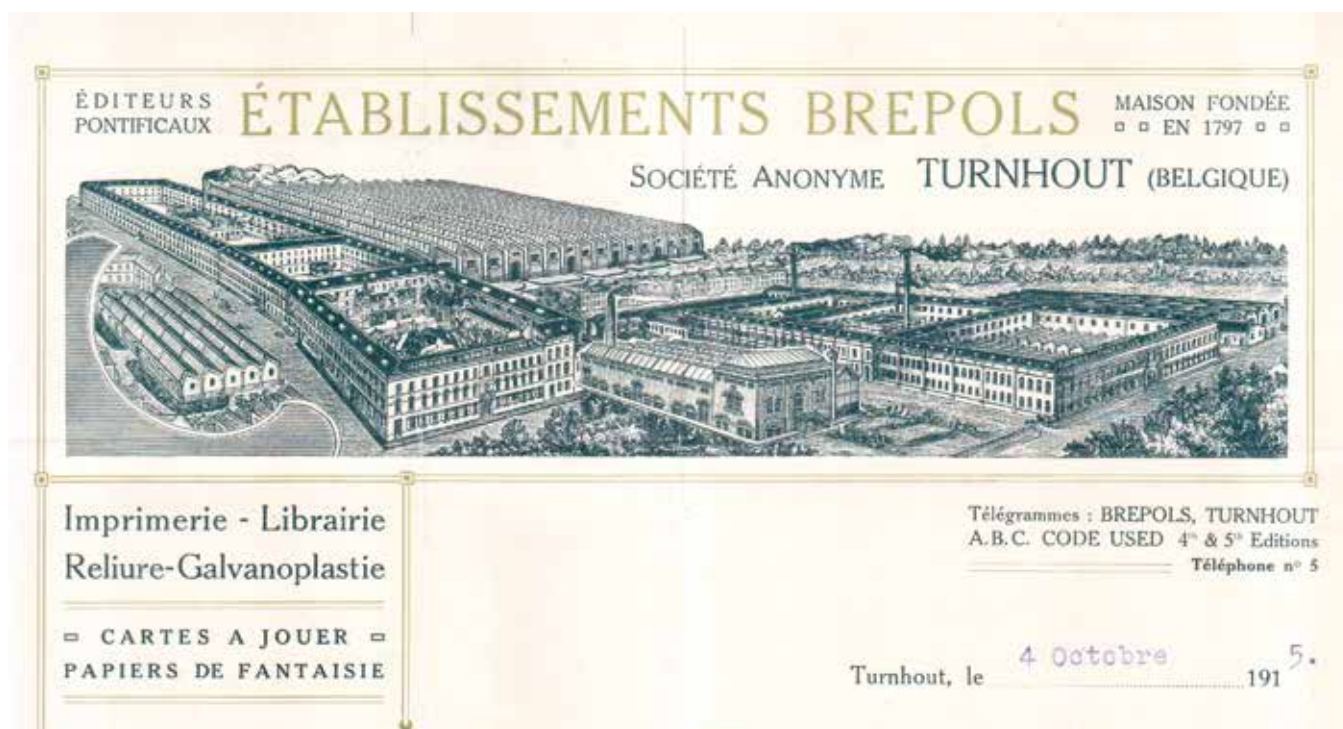
Published by Taylor Hultquist-Todd.

Published in 2019 (dog tarot) and 2020 (cat tarot and 2nd edition of the dog tarot)

Price 42 € (from Etsy). The original pen and ink artworks can be bought in the artist's Etsy web shop (from 45 to 160 €).

Reviewed by Christian de Ryck

Page filler - Letterhead Brepols, Turnhout, 1915





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Notes & Queries

What you want to tell - What you want to ask

Sad News

From the Editor

I have been informed by Wolfgang Altfahrt that our long-time member has died at the beginning of October. There will hopefully be an obituary in the next number of TPC.

Spielkarten entworfen von Félix Vallotton

Von Edi Brum-Antonioli

In den Jahren 1898 bis 1903 entstanden durch Félix Vallotton (1865 – 1925) Entwürfe für ein Kartenspiel, die zwölf Bilder in Tusche und Tempera umfassen:

1898 Pik-König und Kreuz-Bube

1899 Pik-Dame und Kreuz-Dame

1900 Pik-Bube und Kreuz-König

1901 Herz-König und Karo-König

1902 Herz-Dame und Karo-Dame

1903 Herz-Bube und Karo-Bube

Die Originale befinden sich in Privatbesitz.

Die ironisch-distanzierte Darstellung der Figuren lässt die Nähe zum grafischen Werk Vallottons in dieser Zeitspanne erkennen. Sie erinnern an die Figurenwelt der Holzschnitte des Zyklus „Intimités“, den der

karikaturistischen Grafiken, der Illustrationen für „Les Rassemblements“ 1896, des Zyklus „Schuld und Sühne“ und viele mehr.

Inhaltlich scheint gerade in den Pärchen König-Dame die doppelbödige Welt des Großbürgertums auf: Die Könige, der Mann von Welt, der Reiche, der Staatsmann, gepaart mit Königinnen, deren Darstellung die nächtliche Halbwelt evoziert – Königinnen der Nacht.

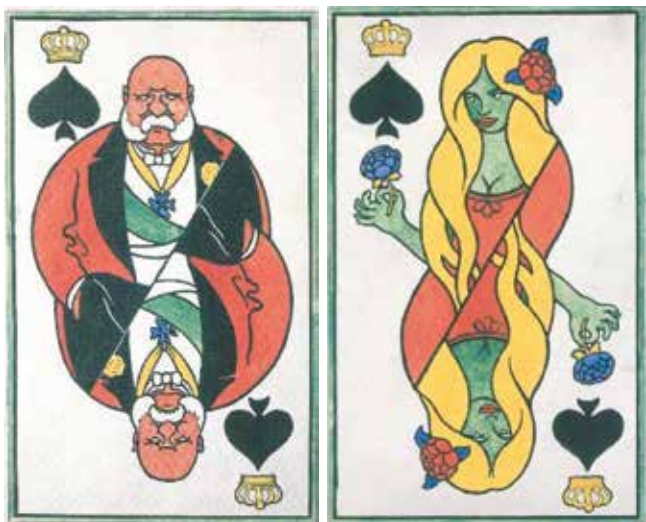
(2008 wurden 200 Exemplare des Spiels für die Freunde der Kunsthalle Hamburg gedruckt.)

Prunkkassette mit Spielzählern und Spieleinsätzen aus Elfenbein

Von Edi Brum-Antonioli

Die Kassette stammt aus Paris, Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts. Der Künstler, Mariaval le Jeune, Paris, war zu dieser Zeit ein sehr gesuchter Elfenbeinmaler und –schnitzer.

Die mit schwarzem Chagrinleder überzogene Holzschatulle schließt an der vorderen Schmalkante mit zwei Messinghaken. Sie ist innen mit hellblauem Seidenmoirée und Goldborten ausgeschlagen. In vier rechteckigen Abteilungen finden vier Elfenbeinkästchen Platz, für jede Spielkartenfarbe eines, 88x60x18 mm. Der Deckel oben trägt eine Drehscheibe mit einer Aussparung, die sich auf einer runden Skala 1 bis X verschieben lässt. Handgeschmiedete Messingscharniere aus der Zeit schließen den Deckel, der an der Oberfläche und auch innen zunächst geätzt und dann mit farbigen Bildern geschmückt wurde. Dargestellt sind außen – links und rechts neben der Drehscheibe – je eine tanzende Figur aus der italienischen *Commedia dell'arte*: Harlekin, Pantalone, Capitano und Columbine. Rundherum zieht sich eine Fruchtgirlande, während in den vier Zwickeln Vögel, Tiere, Schnecken, Fische und Insekten ihr Wesen treiben. An der Deckelinnenseite befinden sich wunderschön gearbeitete verschiedene Blumenvignetten





und als Fußleiste die Signatur „*mariaval le jeune a Paris fecit*“. Die Drehscheiben sind rein ornamental verziert und haben jeweils eines der vier französischen Farbzeichen zur Kennzeichnung für die Spieler. Das weiße Kästchen (Herz) enthält 19 schmale Elfenbeinjetons (68 x 10 mm) und vier rechteckige Wertmarken zu 10, 30, 40 und 50 Einheiten. Alle Jetons sind doppelseitig geätzt und floral bemalt. Das grüne Kästchen enthält 20 schmale und fünf rechteckige

Marken zu 10, 20, 30, 40 und 50 Einheiten, das rote Kästchen 19 schmale und vier rechteckige Marken zu 10, 30, 40 und 50 Einheiten und das gelbe Kästchen 19 schmale und vier rechteckige Marken zu 10, 20, 40 und 50 Einheiten.

Ein ganz ähnliches Exemplar ist bei Hoffmann, *Die Welt der Spielkarte*, auf Farbtafel 6, Text S. 65, und bei Hargrave, *A History of Playing Cards*, p. 311, abgebildet.



Deckel-Innenseite (Beispiel)



Kästchen-Boden (Beispiel)

Publications

ROUNDUP

From other Societies' Publications

Some of the Contents
Images taken from the Publications

The following contents are not complete, mostly there are also announcements and sometimes additional small or larger contributions, this may be a selection.



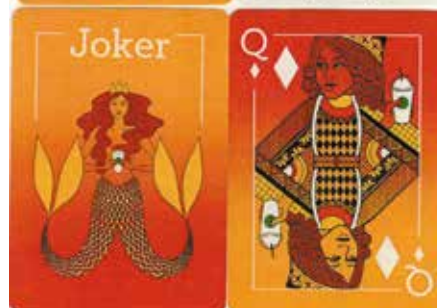
- The Joy of Wide Named Back Designs (Rod Starling shows back designs with women from around 1920) [1]
- Forgotten People (less-known playing card designers and printers, by Dave Seaney)
- Fantasy Poker (Harry Wastrack about his favourite would-be Poker players and their packs used)
- WCMPC 2020 Special: Covid-19 (C. John Eaton and Paul Bostock describe the pack)
- More coffee? (Coffee advertising packs described by Alex Clays.) [2]
- Two Unusual US Finds (Paul Bostock about two packs sent by Jon Randall) [3]
- "Seconds" Playing Cards (Rod Starling has questions about second grade playing cards) [4]
- Playing Card Books (Pt. 2) References (Paul Bostock recommends some books)
- An Introduction to Playing Cards from Spain (Paul Bostock about basic features of Spanish playing-cards.)



[1] "Contentment", "June Roses"



[2] Starbucks "Summer Deck" 2019



[3] Far left: An unusual "Victors" pack



[4] Left: A "seconds" Ace of Spades

La Sota

Número 49 / Octubre 2020

- Filipinas (I) (Victor Ferro Torrelles about playing-cards produced for the Philippine Islands) [1]
- Mariano Arveras (about playing-cards designed by this caricaturist, by Juan Ignacio Pérez González) [2]
- Cartes Parisiennes (Enrique García Martín shows and describes ten packs) [3]
- Heraclio, el innovador (Juan de Dios Agudo Ruiz about Heraclio Fourniers printing techniques)
- El peso de una marca (the influence of Fournier designs on other makers, by Alberto Pérez González) [4]
- Entre política y naipes (Alberto Pérez González describes three political posters with playing-cards)
- Reversos alegóricos de Heraclio Fournier (Enrique García Martín about some back designs)
- Habana 500 (Alberto Pérez González describes a pack edited for the fifth centennial of Habana)



[2] Two designs by Mariano Arveras



[3] Cartes Parisiennes by Le Caméléon, 1848



[1] Examples of cards for the Philippines



[4] Cards by Bürgers, Köln



Note that this is no.3/2019, which came just recently.
All of the journal is devoted to playing card packs made in small numbers and designed by UF (Ung Företagsamhet, young entrepreneurship), student groups in Swedish high schools, from the collection of Ali Jerremalm. 37 packs are shown and described.



Above: Five of the student groups

Left: Two example packs

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The deadline for the next number of *The Playing-Card* is
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