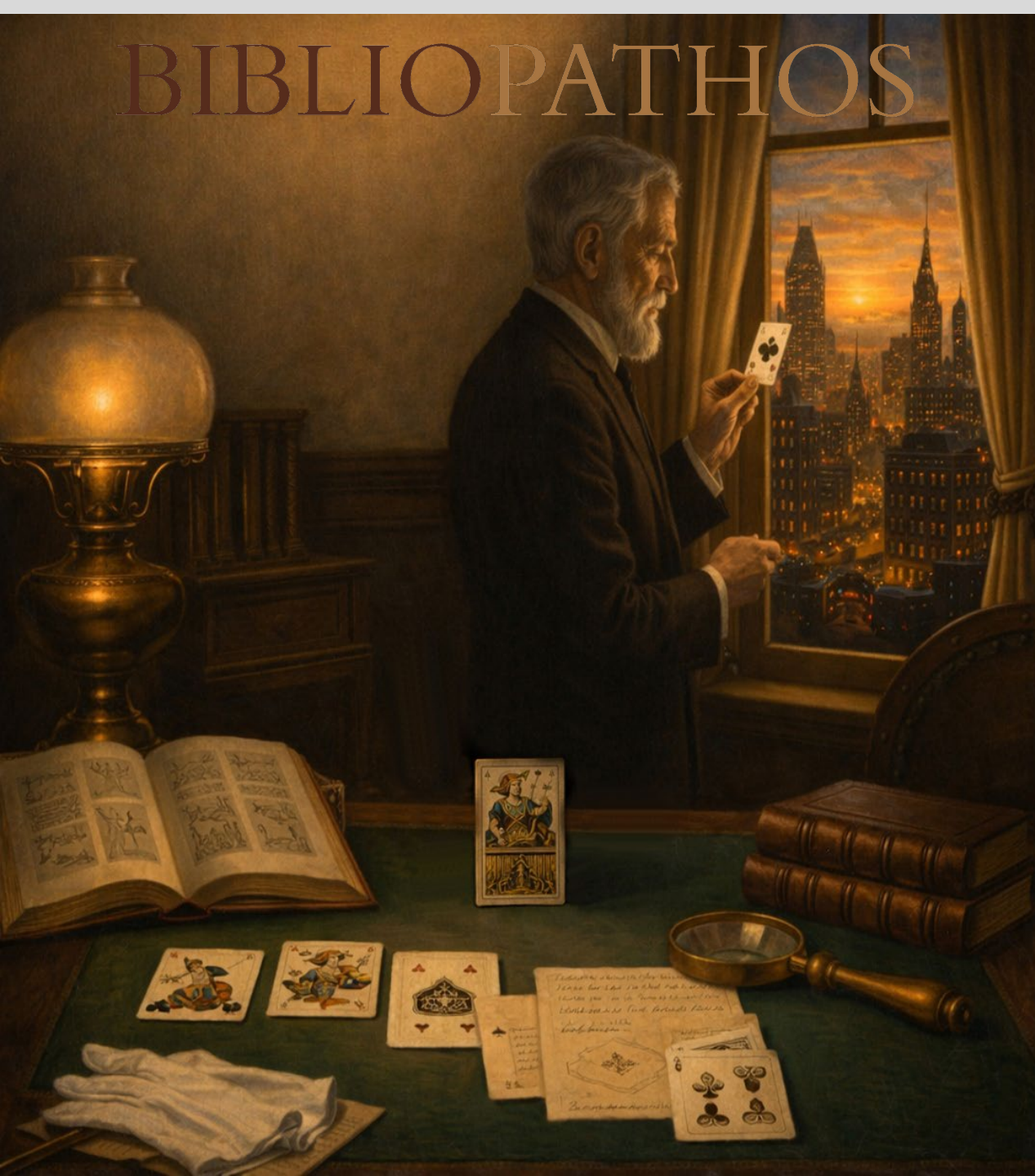


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TAROT, DIVINATION AND PLAYING CARDS

FROM 1550 TO 1996



Lot 4. Della Rocca – Soprafino Tarot. Ferdinando Gumpfenberg

BIBLIOPATHOS

Verona, via Enrico Toti, 1

tel +39 (0)45 592917

www.bibliopathos.it

bibliopathos@bibliopathos.it

BIBLIOPATHOS FINE ARTS

Milano, viale Regina Giovanna, 15

London, 8, Shepherd Market

mobile +39 335 6327764

enzoferro@bibliopathos.it

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Tarot

1766

AN EXTREMELY RARE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BELGIAN TAROT

FROM GALLER TO DUPONT: EVIDENCE OF WORKSHOP TRANSMISSION:
A REGIONAL INTERPRETATION OF THE MARSEILLE TRADITION

1. [TAROT]. *Belgian tarot of the Galler–Dupont lineage*. Brussels: Martin Dupont, Rue de l'Évêque, ca. 1766.

78/78 cards (117 x 68 mm), comprising 22 trumps and 56 suit cards in four suits of fourteen cards each. Woodcut printed on laid paper and coloured by stencil, with occasional hand finishing. Cards of standard tarot format, executed on relatively thin yet resilient stock characteristic of eighteenth-century Brussels production. IPCS Pattern Sheet 19, Belgian Tarot. Versos uniformly printed with a repeating pattern of small radiating suns within a diamond lattice, a diagnostic feature of Brussels manufacture. The Ace of Coins serves as the maker's card, bearing the engraved inscription: *Cartes de Taraut faites par Martin Dupont...dans la rue de l'Eveque à Bruxelles* [sic]. The Four of Coins carries the initials "I.G." within a shield, corresponding to Jean Galler. Condition very good, with minor creasing, light wear, and occasional small stains; colours remain fresh, with strong contrast and well-preserved stencil application.

€ 12.500

A rare Brussels tarot of the third quarter of the eighteenth century, issued by Martin Dupont and preserving clear evidence of direct continuity with the workshop tradition of Jean (Jan) Galler. The retention of the "I.G." monogram within a later production context provides material testimony to the transmission of matrices and models within the Brussels cardmaking milieu, situating the deck within a clearly defined lineage rather than as an isolated production.

The iconographic programme, while rooted in the Marseille model, incorporates several features diagnostic of Brussels production. Trump II appears not as the *Papesse* but as *L'Espagnol*, *Capitano Fracasse*, a figure drawn from the *commedia dell'arte*, a substitution rare within the wider tarot corpus. Trump XVI is denominated *La Foudre*; *Le Fol* bears an explicit numeral as the twenty-second trump, contrary to standard convention; and *Le Pendu* is depicted in inverted orientation relative to its inscription.



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These iconographic transformations are accompanied by a coherent visual language, rendered in a bold woodcut style with strong linear articulation and enhanced by a restrained palette of primary colours. The suit cards are arranged in symmetrical ornamental compositions, integrating emblems with vegetal motifs, reflecting both decorative intent and functional clarity.

A particularly significant feature is the presence of a cartouche on one of the Cup cards bearing the inscription *Povr conoistre qve la plvs basse de deniers et de covpes emporte les plus hautes qvand a fait dv iev*, providing mnemonic instructions for gameplay. This rare survival confirms the deck's primary function as a gaming instrument and offers direct insight into contemporary practice. Such elements reinforce the interpretation of the pack as an object of use within a structured ludic context rather than within later esoteric traditions.

Within the broader framework of eighteenth-century Brussels production, the deck exemplifies a workshop system in which woodcut printing and stencil colouring enabled efficient manufacture while allowing for continuity of design. The relationship with Galler is central: the presence of his initials within a Dupont-issued pack strongly suggests either the reuse of woodblocks, the transfer of matrices, or the precise recutting of earlier models. In all cases, the deck stands as tangible evidence of the preservation and deliberate transmission of a stabilised iconographic type across successive generations of cardmakers.

CONDITIONS: Minor creasing, light wear, and occasional small stains; small brown stain on XV *Le Diable* and Queen of Swords; paper crease on 6 and Queen of Batons; versos with some discolouration, particularly at the edges; colours remain fresh, with strong contrast.

REFERENCES: K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World. A Collector's Guide*, Guildford (Surrey): Lutterworth Press, 1983, p. 129; S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table. Standard Playing Cards of the World and their History*, Vol. II, Leinfelden-Echterdingen and Marburg: Deutsches Spielkarten-Museum, 1990, pl. 211; S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, Stamford (CT): U.S. Games Systems, 1986, p. 330 (illustrated plate); Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *Tarot, jeu et magie*; repertoires of playing card makers in the Southern Netherlands.

International Playing Card Society:

<https://i-p-c-s.org/pattern/ps-19.html>

British Museum, Schreiber Collection, Brussels tarot packs (including Galler and Dupont variants):

https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1896-0501-754

https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1896-0501-755



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1820

19TH CENTURY HAND-PAINTED DECK OF "MINCHIATE FIORENTINE"

2. [MINCHIATE]. *Minchiate Florentine*. Florence: ca. 1820.

83 of 97 cards (97 × 57 mm), metal-engraved plates, stencil-coloured by hand. The deck is composed as follows: 11 of 14 cards from the suit of Coins (missing the 6, 7, and 8); 12 of 14 cards from the suit of Swords (missing the 2 and 10); 14 of 15 cards from the suit of Clubs (missing the 10); and 11 of 14 cards from the suit of Cups (missing the 2, 3, and 9). All six unnumbered trumps are present, while 30 of the 35 numbered trumps survive, with numbers 2, 3, 16, 20, and 21 lacking. Eight cards show a slightly different back, possibly indicating that they originated from another deck.

The cards have dotted borders, as if imitating the folded edges of earlier handmade sheets where the back pattern overlapped the card front. The designs follow the traditional *minchiate* iconography, rendered here with greater finesse and precision than in many contemporary decks. The tax stamp appears on card XXIII *Libra*, reading *Carte da Giuoco Toscane*.

€ 3.800

A clear distinction between the Florentine *Minchiate* and the Bolognese variety can be observed in several specific cards. On the Four of Coins of the Florentine *Minchiate*, a figure of an elephant appears, while in Bolognese production it is replaced by a scroll inscribed *carte fine* and the manufacturer's mark. On the Three of Cups of the Florentine *Minchiate*, a probable lion is depicted; in the Bolognese version, the inscription *CARTE FINE IN BOLOGNA* (or simply *CARTE FINE*) appears instead. On the Four of Cups of the Florentine version, a small monkey gazes into a mirror, whereas in the Bolognese, the card bears the printer's emblem. Another diagnostic element of Florentine manufacture is the watermark of a lily, symbol of the city.

CONDITIONS: Few marks of use; a good, though incomplete, deck.

REFERENCES: S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarots*, Vol. II, pp. 257, 267; C. SCHREIBER, *Catalogue of the collection of playing cards bequeathed to the British Museum by Lady Charlotte Schreiber*, Italian, no. 53; C. SCHREIBER, *Playing Cards of Various Ages and Countries*, III, pl. 90; K. WOVK, *Playing Cards of The World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, pp. 133-134; S. MANN, *All Cards are on the table - Alle Karten Auf Den Tisch*, Deutsches Spielkarten-Museum Leinfelden-Echterding, 1990, Vol II, no. 214; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 227, 231.

1823

FERDINANDO GUMPPENBERG'S EARLY MILAN TAROT
A COMPLETE HAND-PAINTED DECK, IPCS PATTERN 3

3. [TAROT]. *Early Tarot Deck Italian Pattern 3*. Milan: Ferdinando Gumpenberg, Fabbrica di Milano, ca. 1823.

78/78 tarot cards (108 × 55 mm), hand-painted woodcuts; backs decorated with a *Sole Splendente* ("Shining Sun") and a *Cetra* ("Lyre") bearing the inscription *Milano*, characteristic of the *Fabbrica di Milano*; rounded corners; wraparound backs with the reverse design folded slightly over onto the recto edges.

€ 6.500

The design of this deck, originally classified as *IT-1.1*, is now catalogued as *IPCS Pattern 3*. To date, no definitive title has been assigned to this specific pattern. The deck was produced under the aegis of the Milanese cardmakers' consortium known as the *Fabbrica di Milano*, founded and directed by Ferdinando Gumpenberg.

Founded in 1805 under the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy, the *Regia Fabbrica di Carte da Gioco* ("Royal Playing-Card Factory") in Milan was created to revive Lombardy's cardmaking industry, which had languished under Spanish rule. Initially established as a state-controlled enterprise, it gained new vitality in 1809 with the arrival of Ferdinando Gumpenberg, a German printer from Munich who introduced advanced engraving methods and a refined neoclassical aesthetic that transformed Italian card production.

Under Gumpenberg's direction, the factory produced some of the most important Italian tarot decks, including the *Tarocco Neoclassico* (1810), the *Tarocchi della Corona Ferrea*, and the *Vedute e Mestieri di Milano*, which combined neoclassical taste with iconographic innovation. Following the fall of Napoleon, Gumpenberg acquired the factory, converting it into a private enterprise. By 1830, his masterpiece, the *Tarocco Soprafino*, engraved by Carlo Della Rocca, had become the benchmark of tarot design throughout Europe.

In later years, Gumpenberg's legacy was continued by Lattanzio Lamperti (see Lot 8) and, briefly, Teodoro Dotti (see Lots 5, 7), both of whom preserved the high artistic standards of the *Fabbrica di Milano*. Through its production of both popular and luxury decks, the factory remained a cornerstone of Milanese playing-card art throughout the nineteenth century, synonymous with excellence, craftsmanship, and innovation.



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FERDINANDO GUMPPENBERG (1785–1840). Trained in Munich under publisher J. Fetscher, Ferdinando Gumpfenberg was invited to Milan in 1809, at the age of twenty-five, to modernize the state-run *Regia Fabbrica di Carte da Gioco*. He introduced the latest German-Austrian innovations in copper- and steel-plate etching, refined colour application techniques, and a cultivated *Mitteleuropean* aesthetic that revolutionized Italian cardmaking.

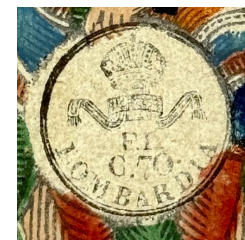
His first triumph, the *Tarocco Neoclassico* (1810), combined neoclassical design with Napoleonic symbolism; it was followed by the historically themed *Tarocchi della Corona Ferrea* and *Vedute di Milano*, both integrating local monuments and urban trades into the tarot iconography. While providing regional *Piacentine* and *Lombarde* packs for everyday use, Gumpfenberg simultaneously produced luxurious editions for aristocratic salons, achieving both commercial reach and elite prestige.

His masterpiece, the *Tarocco Soprafino* (ca. 1830), engraved by Carlo Della Rocca and richly hand-coloured, set the standard for nineteenth-century luxury tarot and inspired numerous imitations, most notably by his pupil Teodoro Dotti. Experimental productions, including double-figure tarots with French suits and innovative parlour games, further demonstrated his technical audacity.

Gumpfenberg's marriage into a Milanese family and his daughter Paola's later union with Lattanzio Lamperti ensured the continuity of the enterprise, which he gradually privatized and transformed into a thriving, market-oriented workshop. By the mid-1830s he had retired, leaving behind an industry profoundly transformed: the name *Fabbrica di Milano* endured as a synonym for craftsmanship, artistry, and innovation long after his death.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: Tax stamp "FI C.70 LOMBARDIA" on the King of Batons. This stamp was in use in the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia from 1823 to 1840. The inscription reads "Lombardia" and "F.I." (referring to Franz I of Austria); the denomination "C.70" (70 *centesimi*) corresponds to the tax for tarot decks, whereas regular playing cards were subject to a 40 *centesimi* rate.



REFERENCES: S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 221, 387-390; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 133-136; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 31-34, 52.

1835

«TAROCCHINO MILANESE SOPRAFINO»
CARLO DELLA ROCCA'S CANONICAL DESIGN

4. [TAROT]. *Tarocchino Milanese Soprafino-Della Rocca Pattern*, Milan: Ferdinando Gumpfenberg, Fabbrica di Milano, ca. 1835.

78/78 tarot cards (108 x 55 mm), printed from woodcut matrices and delicately hand-coloured. The cards are on moderately thick paper stock, with straight corners. Backs decorated with a repeating dotted geometric pattern. Italian suits: Spade, Bastoni, Coppe, Denari. Court cards are single-ended and comprise King, Queen, Knight, and Valet. Twenty-one numbered trumps (I–XXI) plus the unnumbered Fool (“Il Matto”). On the King of Bastoni appears the engraved signature “C. Della Rocca inc.” together with the printer’s device “Fab. di Gumpfenberg Milano” and a fiscal stamp of the Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom, dated 1844/45, with the inscription “LOMB. 1844,” “MILO,” and value “LIRE una,” specifically issued for tarot packs. The letter “M” appears on the garment of the Fool. The deck is preserved in its original sliding cardboard box, covered in pink paper.

€ 9.000

A complete and finely preserved example of the celebrated *Tarocchino Milanese Soprafino*, designed by Carlo Della Rocca and produced by Ferdinand Gumpfenberg at the *Fabbrica di Milano*. More than a distinguished survival, this deck represents the stabilized and most authoritative form of the Milanese tarot tradition, the model through which nineteenth-century Lombard tarot achieved its fullest visual coherence. The conjunction of signed plate, printer’s imprint, official fiscal mark, and complete state gives the pack unusual documentary authority, while its refined engraving and delicate colouring place it among the most significant Italian tarot productions of the century. The deck preserves the canonical Italian structure of 56 suited cards and 22 trumps, yet its importance lies not merely in completeness but in the exceptional quality of the iconographic system. Della Rocca did not overturn the inherited tarot sequence, rather he disciplined and elevated it, clarifying gesture, hierarchy, and spatial balance with a degree of graphic intelligence rare in popular print. The suits retain the familiar northern Italian interlacing of Bastoni and Spade, while the trumps unfold with a composure and clarity that transform traditional types into fully resolved pictorial inventions. Figures such as the *Papessa*, the *Imperatrice*, and the *Imperatore* are marked by monumentality without rigidity, and even the simplest cards reveal a remarkable consistency of hand and conception. The *Bagatto* becomes a working cobbler at his bench, grounding the figure in a recognisable social reality; the *Lovers* acquire a more complex narrative tension; *Justice* and the *Hermit* are subtly reimagined through expressive shifts in attribute and posture. Throughout, the engraving remains controlled and elegant, never overloaded, and the hand-colouring reinforces legibility rather than distracting from it.



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The same authority is evident in the more dramatic cards. *Strength* abandons static formula in favour of physical struggle, *Death* becomes an image of active despoilment and moral transience, and the *Devil* is rendered with a force and lucidity that heighten the expressive power of the composition without lapsing into excess. The *Moon* and *Sun* introduce especially memorable landscape settings, while the *World* concludes the sequence with a richly integrated composition that confirms the deck's ornamental and symbolic completeness. Court cards, though faithful to established hierarchies, are unusually individual in facial type, stance, and costume, and the pip cards display a delicacy that reflects the overall sophistication of the series. Historically, the deck belongs to the decisive phase in which Milanese cardmaking emerged as one of the most refined centres of European production. The *Fabbrica di Milano*, established under Napoleonic rule and transformed under Gumpfenberg's direction, united technical improvement with a more ambitious artistic programme. Within this context the *Tarocco Soprafino*, engraved by Della Rocca around 1830, became the culminating achievement of the workshop and the dominant visual model for subsequent tarot production in northern Italy. The present pack stands within that lineage not as a derivative survival, but as one of its primary and defining expressions. The Lombardo-Venetian fiscal stamp dated 1844 provides a precise administrative anchor, linking the deck to the regulated circulation of playing cards under Austrian rule and confirming its place within a taxed and monitored market for leisure objects. The slightly reduced *Tarocchino* format, compared with the Piedmontese tarot, reflects regional usage and handling preferences, while the persistence of the imagery ensured that the pack could operate beyond play alone, remaining available to symbolic and, at times, divinatory reading.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use consistent with handling; minor toning and occasional faint staining. Overall, a well-preserved and visually strong example, with colours remaining clear and well-defined.

PROVENANCE: Italian fiscal stamp on King of Batons, in use in the Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom 1844/45. The stamp reads 'LOMB. 1844' and 'MILO' (for 'Milano'); the denomination is 'LIRE una', indicating issue for tarot packs.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming*, Mineola (NY): Dover Publications, 2000, pp. 232, 246; T. DEPAULIS, *The 'Tarot de Marseille' – Facts and Fallacies*, *The Playing-Card*, Vol. 42, 2013, nos. 1, 2; T. DEPAULIS, *Le Tarot révélé: une histoire du tarot d'après les documents*, La Tour-de-Peilz: Musée Suisse du Jeu, 2013; S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, Stamford (CT): U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 362-363; M. DUMMETT, *The Game of Tarot*, London: Duckworth, 1980.

1842

A COMPLETE HAND-PAINTED DECK OF ITALIAN TAROT
BELONGING TO IPCS PATTERN 3 BY TEODORO DOTTI

5. [TAROT]. *Early Tarot Deck*. Milan: Teodoro Dotti, Fabbrica di Milano, 1842 (sold in 1845).

78/78 tarot cards (108 × 55 mm), hand-painted woodcuts; backs decorated with an elaborate arabesque printed in red, bearing the inscription *Milano*, characteristic of the *Fabbrica di Milano*; rounded corners; wraparound backs with the reverse pattern folded slightly over onto the recto edges. On the King of Batons appears the maker's name *Teodoro Dotti Mil^o [Milano]*; on the Three of Cups, the inscription *Fabbrica di Milano*.

€ 4.800

The design of this deck, originally classified as IT-1.1, is now referred to as IPCS Pattern 3. To date, no comprehensive title has been established for this particular pattern. The deck was produced within the Milanese cardmakers' consortium known as the *Fabbrica di Milano*, originally founded by Ferdinando Gumpfenberg.

Established in 1805 under the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy, the *Regia Fabbrica di Carte da Gioco* ("Royal Playing-Card Factory") was created to revitalise Lombardy's cardmaking industry, which had declined under Spanish rule. Initially state-controlled, it flourished from 1809 under the direction of Ferdinando Gumpfenberg, a Munich-trained printer who introduced German engraving precision, advanced colour techniques, and a refined *Mitteleuropean* aesthetic that redefined Italian cardmaking.

Under Gumpfenberg's leadership, the factory issued major works such as the *Tarocco Neoclassico* (1810), the *Tarocchi della Corona Ferrea*, and the *Vedute e Mestieri di Milano*, combining neoclassical elegance with local iconography. After Napoleon's fall, Gumpfenberg transformed the state factory into a private enterprise, inaugurating a golden age of Milanese production. His masterpiece, the *Tarocco Soprafino* (ca. 1830), engraved by Carlo Della Rocca, set the European standard for nineteenth-century tarot design.

Following Gumpfenberg's retirement, the *Fabbrica di Milano* continued under Lattanzio Lamperti and Teodoro Dotti, who maintained its artistic excellence and refined craftsmanship. Dotti's 1842 deck represents the mature phase of this lineage, faithful to Gumpfenberg's models yet enriched by his own technical mastery and vibrant hand-colouring, preserving the splendour of Italian tarot production at its apogee.



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TEODORO DOTTI (Milano, active ca. 1838-1860) represents the direct continuity of the Milanese tarot-making tradition following the era of Ferdinando Gumpfenberg. Having entered the *Fabbrica di Milano* at a very young age, he served between 1838 and 1842 as Gumpfenberg's partner, contributing to the management of the enterprise and mastering the subtleties of the craft. When the partnership was dissolved in 1842, Dotti established his own printing workshop, drawing upon the expertise acquired under his mentor's tutelage.

Faithful to Gumpfenberg's legacy, Dotti's principal production was a tarot deck modelled after the celebrated *Tarocco Soprafino*. Lacking access to Gumpfenberg's original copper and steel plates, however, Dotti commissioned entirely new matrices from a trusted engraver. The resulting tarot closely followed the *Soprafino*'s iconographic structure while introducing discreet stylistic refinements, effectively constituting a "Dotti variant" of the renowned prototype. This origin confers on Dotti's deck a distinctive significance: it stands simultaneously as homage and creative reinterpretation of Carlo Della Rocca's masterpiece.

Dotti managed his workshop for approximately two decades, maintaining a consistently high standard of artistry and production. His principal tarot production belongs to the 1840s; the present deck was issued in 1842 and sold in 1845. A surviving example of his broader output, a 52-card historical playing deck dated 1846, demonstrates that his work extended beyond tarot to encompass traditional card types. Upon his death around 1860, the business passed nominally to his minor children; in practice, it was his eldest son, Edoardo Dotti, who assumed control of the workshop and carried forward the family legacy.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use; overall a fine deck.

PROVENANCE: 1. Tax stamp *LOMBARDIA, MIL°* (for Milano), *Lire una*, and *1845*. This is a stamp from the Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom in use 1845, when the deck was sold.



REFERENCES: S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 387-390; K. WOUK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 133-136; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 31-34, 52. The International Playing-Card Society website.



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1860

BETWEEN MARSEILLE AND SWITZERLAND:
A TAROT DE BESANÇON BY PELLERIN OF ÉPINAL

6. [TAROT]. GEORGIN, FRANÇOIS. *Tarots de Besançon*. Épinal: Fabrique de Pellerin et Cie, ca. 1860.

78/78 cards (115 × 65 mm), printed from woodblocks and coloured by stencil (*pochoir*) on thin card, typical of Épinal popular productions; backs decorated with an orange pattern. Titles inscribed in French, with occasional peculiarities such as *L'Escamoteur* for *Le Bateleur* and *Le Capucin* for *L'Hermite*. The deck bears the printer's identification on the Two of Cups: *Fabrique de Pellerin et Cie à Épinal (Vosges)*. The name *Pellerin* is impressed along the margins of the court cards, *Le Fou*, and *L'Empereur*. The woodcuts were produced by the famed engraver François Georgin.

€ 3.000

A COMPLETE DECK OF THE TAROTS DE BESANÇON IPCS PATTERN SHEET 6, PRINTED BY IMAGERIE D'ÉPINAL, THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PRODUCER OF POPULAR PRINTS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE. This deck represents one of the most accomplished Épinal manifestations of the *Tarots de Besançon*. Its significance lies not only in the precision of the woodcut outlines and the brilliance of the stencil colouring, but also in its role as a mediator between the canonical Marseille model and regional variants acceptable to both Catholic and Protestant audiences. Pellerin's imprint gave the Besançon tarot unprecedented diffusion across France, Switzerland, and Germany.

The *Tarots de Besançon* constitute a distinctive historical variant of the traditional *Tarot de Marseille*, which emerged between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly in the Franco-Swiss regions and adjoining parts of Central Europe. Their name derives from the city of Besançon, in Franche-Comté, a principal centre for the manufacture and trade of playing cards.

The most conspicuous difference from the *Tarot de Marseille* lies in the substitution of the papal figures, the Pope and the Popess, with the classical deities Juno and Jupiter. This “secularisation” of imagery may be interpreted as a deliberate compromise: while the tarot was initially associated with predominantly Catholic Italian and French contexts, papal figures risked being perceived as overly confessional in transregional markets. By introducing Roman deities embodying wisdom and power, the cards acquired a more neutral, universally intelligible symbolism, thereby broadening their appeal.



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Among other characteristics of this deck:

- The Magician titled *L'Escamoteur*, emphasising his role as conjurer or trickster.
- The Hermit styled *Le Capucin*, portrayed as a Capuchin friar rather than a generic old man.
- Justice (VIII) bearing unusual allegories: a serpent and a mirror, alongside balance and sword, and the inscription “LOIS” on a stone table.
- Death, untitled, consistent with older traditions.
- The Empress and Emperor lacking numerical indices.

NICOLAS PELLERIN, a *maître-cartier* originally from Mauvages, settled in Épinal in the mid-eighteenth century and established a family tradition of cardmaking. His son Jean-Charles Pellerin (1756–1836) succeeded to the workshop in 1773 and, in 1796, formally founded the *Imagerie Pellerin*, which soon became the most important popular print factory in Épinal, producing devotional images, almanacs, historical scenes, and tarot packs of the Besançon type. In 1818, he transferred the direction of the business to his son Nicolas Pellerin (1782–1854) and his son-in-law Pierre-Gabriel Vadet, who expanded the enterprise and diversified its production. After Jean-Charles’s death in 1836, the family maintained control of the press, and on 30 October 1858 the heirs reorganized the business under the corporate title *Pellerin et C^e*, a designation never used by Jean-Charles himself, but which became the standard imprint of the Épinal workshop during the second half of the nineteenth century. This mark appeared on both popular prints and tarot decks, such as the *Tarot de Besançon*, generally dated to ca. 1858–1865. The house continued to prosper under successive generations, adopting lithography after 1840 and securing the lasting reputation of the *Imagerie d’Épinal* as the leading European publisher of popular imagery.

FRANÇOIS GEORGIN (1801–1863) was a French engraver and illustrator, celebrated as one of the foremost exponents of nineteenth-century popular imagery and closely associated with the production of playing cards and tarots in Épinal.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use; overall a very good deck.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 37, 39, 81; H. R. D’ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIVe au XXe siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906; S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*. Vol. I, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, p. 245; K. Wowk, *Playing Cards of The World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, p. 13; The International Playing-Card Society website.

1863

AN EXTREMELY RARE COMPLETE HAND-PAINTED ITALIAN TAROT DECK
«TAROCCHINO MILANESE – DELLA ROCCA» BY TEODORO DOTTI

7. [TAROT]. *Tarocchino Milanese Della Rocca Pattern*, Milano: Teodoro Dotti, Fabbrica di Milano, ca. 1863.

78/78 tarot cards (108 x 55 mm), printed from woodcut matrices and hand-coloured. The cards are on moderately thick paper stock, with straight corners. Backs decorated with a repeating geometric pattern in pink. Italian suits: Spade, Bastoni, Coppe, Denari. Court cards are single-ended and comprise King, Queen, Knight, and Valet. Twenty-one numbered trumps (I–XXI) plus the unnumbered Fool (“Il Matto”). Maker’s inscriptions present: on the King of Batons “Fabbrica Fratelli Dotti Milano”; on the Ace of Coins “Edoardo Dotti Milano.” Fiscal stamp on the Ace of Coins reading “REGNO D’ITALIA – LEGGE 21 Sett. 1862,” value 50 centesimi, indicating official taxation.

€ 4.800

An exceptionally rare complete example of the Tarocchino Milanese, produced by Teodoro Dotti within the milieu of the Fabbrica di Milano around 1862–1863, and directly derived from Carlo Della Rocca’s celebrated *Tarocco Soprafino*. The deck represents a refined yet autonomous reinterpretation of the Milanese tarot tradition, preserving the structural and iconographic coherence of the Soprafino model while introducing subtle variations in engraving, proportion, and chromatic handling that distinguish it as a distinct production rather than a mechanical replication.

The canonical structure of 56 suited cards and 22 trumps is rigorously maintained, with the Italian suits rendered in the characteristic intertwined manner of northern production, a feature that immediately situates the deck within the Lombard visual tradition. The trumps adhere closely to the established Milanese sequence, articulated through clear linework and a controlled yet vivid palette, in which colour is applied not merely decoratively but as a means of reinforcing symbolic hierarchy and visual legibility. Figures such as the Papessa, Imperatrice, and Imperatore retain their formal authority, rendered with compositional balance and a measured restraint that reflects the aesthetic discipline inherited from Della Rocca’s engravings.

At the same time, careful observation reveals a slight simplification of the graphic vocabulary when compared to the most elaborate Soprafino examples, particularly in secondary ornamental details and background articulation. This reduction, however, does not diminish the visual effectiveness of the deck; rather, it reflects a transition toward a more streamlined production model, in which clarity, reproducibility, and market adaptability begin to take precedence over the virtuosity of the original engraved plates.



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The iconographic programme reflects continuity rather than innovation, yet it is precisely this fidelity that situates the deck within the historical transmission of the Soprafino model. The Fool, depicted as a wandering figure accompanied by a dog, and the Devil, rendered with moderated grotesque features, exemplify a visual language that balances inherited symbolism with a softened nineteenth-century sensibility. Court cards remain single-ended, indicating a production still oriented toward gameplay rather than later industrial symmetry, and preserving an earlier functional approach to card design.

This deck belongs to the second phase of the Milanese tarot tradition, following the innovations introduced by Ferdinand Gumpenberg and the engravings of Carlo Della Rocca. After the privatization of the Fabbrica di Milano, the Soprafino became the dominant visual standard, widely imitated by successors such as Dotti. The present example reflects this process of controlled replication and reinterpretation within a changing political and economic framework, where artistic models were preserved while production methods evolved.

The fiscal stamp “REGNO D’ITALIA – LEGGE 21 Sett. 1862” provides a precise chronological anchor, situating the deck in the early years of the unified Kingdom of Italy, when the production and circulation of playing cards were subject to standardized taxation. The reduced Tarocchino format, compared to the Piedmontese type, further suggests adaptation to regional usage and practical handling.

Taken together, the completeness of the deck, the preservation of its hand-colouring, and the presence of official fiscal markings define an object of both documentary relevance and collecting importance, illustrating the continuity of Milanese tarot production in the decades following its highest artistic phase, while also bearing witness to its gradual transformation into a more structured and regulated industry.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use; overall a well-preserved deck.

PROVENANCE: Italian fiscal stamp on the Ace of Coins, “REGNO D’ITALIA – LEGGE 21 Sett. 1862,” value 50 *centesimi*, indicating official circulation within the Kingdom of Italy between 1863 and 1874.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming*, Mineola (NY): Dover Publications, 2000, pp. 232, 246; T. DEPAULIS, *The ‘Tarot de Marseille’ – Facts and Fallacies*, *The Playing-Card*, Vol. 42, 2013, nos. 1, 2; T. DEPAULIS, *Le Tarot révélé: une histoire du tarot d’après les documents*, La Tour-de-Peilz: 2013; S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, Stamford (CT): U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 374-375; M. DUMMETT, *The Game of Tarot*, London: Duckworth, 1980; IPCS, International Playing Card Society.



1835 Gumpfenberg "Della Rocca"



1863 Dotti "Della Rocca"

COMPARATIVE NOTE: GUMPPENBERG AND DOTTI SOPRAFINO DECKS

When directly compared with the earlier *Tarocco Soprafino* produced by Ferdinand Gumpfenberg and engraved by Carlo Della Rocca, the Dotti deck reveals itself as a faithful yet technically and stylistically mediated reinterpretation of the original model. The overall iconographic structure remains substantially unchanged, confirming the authority of Della Rocca's design; however, the differences emerge clearly at the level of engraving, line quality, and chromatic handling.

The Gumpfenberg deck is characterized by a finer and more controlled engraved line, with greater depth in hatching and a more nuanced modulation of light and shadow. Figures such as the Devil, Death, and the Papessa display a sharper anatomical definition and a more sophisticated treatment of secondary details, particularly in facial features, drapery, and ornamental elements. In contrast, the Dotti version exhibits a slightly simplified graphic language: contours are more pronounced, internal modelling is reduced, and certain decorative passages are either abbreviated or regularized, suggesting the use of newly cut matrices rather than direct reuse of the original plates.

Chromatically, the Gumpfenberg deck presents a more balanced and harmonized palette, with subtle tonal transitions and a controlled application of colour that reinforces volumetric perception. The Dotti colouring, while vivid and attractive, tends toward stronger contrasts and flatter application, producing a more immediate visual effect but with less atmospheric depth. This difference is particularly evident in backgrounds and in areas of complex ornamentation.

A further distinction lies in the overall compositional refinement. In the Gumpfenberg deck, figures are more proportionally calibrated within the frame, and spatial relationships are more convincingly articulated. The Dotti cards, while closely following the same models, occasionally display slight rigidities or compressions in posture and setting, indicative of a translation process rather than an original conception.

These differences should not be understood as deficiencies, but rather as evidence of a shift in production logic. The Gumpfenberg deck represents the moment of highest artistic definition within the Milanese tarot tradition, in which engraving and design reach a state of formal equilibrium. The Dotti deck, by contrast, belongs to a subsequent phase of transmission, in which the established model is adapted for continued production under changing economic and technical conditions.

From a collecting perspective, the distinction is clear: the Gumpfenberg *Soprafino* is the primary model; the Dotti version is a historically significant derivative documenting its later transmission.

1863

A COMPLETE HAND-PAINTED ITALIAN TAROT, IPCS PATTERN 3
BY LATTANZIO LAMPERTI, SON-IN-LAW OF GUMPPENBERG

8. [TAROT]. *Early Tarot deck*. Milan: Lattanzio Lamperti, Fabbrica di Milano, 1863.

78/78 tarot cards (108 x 55 mm), hand-painted woodcuts; backs decorated with an image of a serpent entwined around a staff and a flowering branch, printed in blue and inscribed *Milano*, a design characteristic of the *Fabbrica di Milano*; rounded corners; wraparound backs, with the reverse pattern slightly overlapping the recto edges. On the King of Batons appears the maker's name *L. Lamperti Mil. [Milano]*; on the Three of Cups, the inscription *Fabbrica di Milano*.

€ 4.500

This deck follows the design originally classified as *IT-1.1*, now identified as *IPCS Pattern 3*. No definitive title has yet been assigned to this specific variant. The deck was produced by Lattanzio Lamperti, son-in-law and successor of Ferdinando Gumpfenberg, within the celebrated Milanese cardmakers' consortium *Fabbrica di Milano*.

Founded in 1805 under the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy, the *Regia Fabbrica di Carte da Gioco* ("Royal Playing-Card Factory") was established to revitalize Lombardy's declining cardmaking industry. The enterprise flourished from 1809, when Ferdinando Gumpfenberg, a printer from Munich, introduced German engraving precision, improved colour techniques, and an elegant *Mitteleuropean* aesthetic that transformed Italian production.

Under Gumpfenberg's leadership, the factory issued landmark decks such as the *Tarocco Neoclassico* (1810), the *Tarocchi della Corona Ferrea*, and the *Vedute e Mestieri di Milano*, which fused neoclassical taste with innovative iconography. Following Napoleon's fall, Gumpfenberg acquired the factory and re-established it as a private enterprise. By 1830, his masterpiece, the *Tarocco Soprafino*, engraved by Carlo Della Rocca, had become the European standard for nineteenth-century tarot design.

Upon Gumpfenberg's retirement, direction passed to Lattanzio Lamperti, who maintained the factory's celebrated standards of craftsmanship and refinement. His work reflects both fidelity to Gumpfenberg's models and a distinctive sensibility of his own, evident in the refined engraving, vivid hand-colouring, and sophisticated back design featuring the entwined serpent motif, a symbol of wisdom and renewal, aptly mirroring the continuity of the Milanese tarot tradition.



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LATTANZIO LAMPERTI (Milan, active ca. 1847–1870) was the third key figure of the Milanese *triad*, together with Ferdinando Gumpfenberg and Teodoro Dotti, who shaped the evolution of Italian tarot and playing-card production during the nineteenth century. His connection with Gumpfenberg was not merely professional but also familial: Lamperti married Paola Gumpfenberg, thus becoming his son-in-law and direct heir to both his technical knowledge and artistic legacy. He likely assisted Gumpfenberg during the latter's final years of active work, learning the intricacies of printing, colouring, and business management within the *Fabbrica di Milano*. When Gumpfenberg retired, Lamperti assumed direction of the factory, continuing production under his own name. It is probable that he also acquired his father-in-law's presses and engraving plates, thereby ensuring continuity for the most successful lines of cards already established in the market. Evidence of this transitional period is found in certain decks bearing dual signatures, *Gumpfenberg-Lamperti*. One example is a deck in which the Ace of Coins carries both the printed inscription *Gumpfenberg Milano* and the ink stamp *L. Lamperti Mil.*, together with a fiscal stamp dated 1847. Such details suggest that Lamperti may have sold remaining stock from Gumpfenberg's production while gradually adding his own imprint, or perhaps continued to use the Gumpfenberg name temporarily to preserve brand recognition. By around 1850, however, Lamperti's name appears alone, marking his full assumption of the enterprise. Lamperti primarily specialized in producing "popular" decks, including both tarot and standard playing cards, issued with Italian suits (Coins, Cups, Batons, Swords) as well as French suits, catering to both local and regional markets. Although the exact duration of his business remains uncertain, documentary and stylistic evidence indicates that the *Fabbrica di L. Lamperti* remained active at least into the 1860s, possibly extending further before ceasing operations, whether due to the absence of entrepreneurial heirs or through absorption by competing Milanese firms.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use; overall a fine and complete deck.

PROVENANCE: Tax stamp *REGNO D'ITALIA – LEGGE 21 Sett. 1862*, with denominations of 50 *centesimi*; this fiscal issue was in use between 1863 and 1874.



REFERENCES: S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 387-390; K. WOVK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 133-136; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 31-34, 52. The International Playing-Card Society website.



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1890

«FROM CHAOS TO CREATION»: ETTEILLA TYPE II

9. [TAROT]. ETTEILLA. *Tarots Egyptiens – Livre de Thot*. Paris: Grimaud, ca. 1890.

78/78 cards (128 × 80 mm), chromolithographed on stiff cardboard. The versos display a regular decorative motif of small pink ornamental patterns, applied by stencil, with rounded corners. The first Atout bears the name “ETTEILLA” at the upper margin. The deck follows the schema of the *Etteilla Type II* as classified by Decker–Depaulis–Dummett, distinguished by its symmetrical layout of titles and upright/reversed keywords on each card.

€ 1.500

The *Livre de Thot* was the first tarot created expressly for divination, departing from earlier gaming traditions. Conceived in late Enlightenment Paris, it embodied Hermetic and Egyptological currents promoted by Court de Gébelin and Jean-Baptiste Alliette (Etteilla). The cards form a symbolic cosmology of Genesis and Hermetic wisdom, intended as a visual scripture for interpreting destiny. This Grimaud edition (ca. 1890) preserves the essential features of Etteilla’s Type II deck, making it a key witness to the birth of modern cartomancy.

Etteilla’s hermeneutic system gave each card dual readings (upright/reversed), linking them to Creation, biblical allegory, and numerology. Early cards represent Chaos, the elements, and the Genesis sequence, while figures such as Justice or Fortune shift meaning depending on orientation. His model became foundational for later occultists including Lévi, Papus, and Wirth.

BAPTISTE-PAUL GRIMAUD (1817–1899) transformed French card-making with chromolithography and standardization. By reissuing Etteilla decks, Grimaud secured a central role in nineteenth-century cartomancy, a legacy continued well into the twentieth century.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use on some cards; overall a good deck.

PROVENANCE: On card 62, tax stamp *Avril 12 1890 République Française*, used in France from 1890 to 1917.

REFERENCES: BnF, *Paul Hammer donation*, 1966, no. 430; Benham, 2019; Hargrave, 2021; D’Allemagne, 1906; Depaulis, 1984.

1893

THE «TAROTS CHINOIS», A NINETEENTH-CENTURY DOUBLE-HEADED DIVINATION DECK

10. [TAROT]. *Tarots Allemand à 2 têtes Chinois*. Paris: Grimaud, 1893.

78/78 cards (10,5 x 5,5 cm), woodcut designs hand-coloured *à pochoir* (stencil-coloured) in vivid tones; rounded corners; printed on thick card stock; versos decorated with intricate geometric motifs in varying shades of green. Cards numbered in black; all trump cards (*Atouts*) bear the printed legend *France et B.P. Grimaud*. French suits: Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, and Spades.

€ 700

A rare example of the *Tarots Allemand à deux têtes Chinois* deck, also known as the “Chinese Tarot.” It comprises 56 suit cards and 22 trumps: four suits of fourteen cards each (King, Queen, Knight, Valet, and pip cards from Ace to Ten), twenty-one numbered trumps (*Atouts I–XXI*), and an unnumbered Fool (*Le Fou*). The court cards and trumps are all double-headed (*à deux têtes*), designed for bidirectional reading during play.

The imagery presents a distinctive fusion of Germanic tarot structure and exoticized chinoiserie elements, fashionable in late nineteenth-century European design. The trumps are adorned with architectural motifs reminiscent of Chinese temples, robed figures in imagined East Asian attire, and hybrid sea creatures, creating a fantastical aesthetic loosely inspired by Chinese art yet filtered through a European romanticised lens. The court figures adopt similar orientalist costumes, blending traditional European rank indicators with exotic garments and symbolic accessories.

This version traces its lineage to the model devised by A. Lefer, a Parisian cardmaker and stationer active in the early nineteenth century, who catered to the sizeable German community in the capital. A copy of an early deck signed by Lefer is preserved in the Musée de Rouen. In 1872, the design and manufacturing rights passed to the firm Lequart & Mignot, who continued its production until their integration into B.P. Grimaud in 1890. The present deck belongs to this latter period, as indicated by the consistent Grimaud signature across all trumps.

CONDITIONS: Marks of use on all cards; overall, a good complete deck.

PROVENANCE: Tax stamp “RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE DÉCRET DU 12 AVRIL 1890”, used in France from 1890 to 1917.

REFERENCES: C. FOUDEZ and G. BERTI, *Oriental Tarots*. Araba Fenice, 2016; Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, Leber, 1351 XLI ; T. DEPAULIS, *Tarot Jeu et Magie*, 1984, no. 81; S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol II, US Games Systems, 1994, pp. 476-479.



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1900

THE «AUSTRIAN TAROCK PATTERN TYPE B»
AMONG THE FINEST OF THE «WORK-AND-PLAY» TAROTS

11. [TAROT]. *Austrian Tarock Deck*, Wien: Josef Glanz, 1900.

54/54 tarot cards (110 x 62 mm), chromolithography, card backs decorated with an orange geometric pattern, rounded corners, French suits. Tax stamp and printer's device *Josef Glanz* on the Ace of Hearts, *Jos. Glanz in Wien* on the Jack of Diamonds, and printer's details with address on the *Jack of Clubs*.

€ 1.100

The deck belongs to the pattern known as *Austrian Tarock Pattern Type B*. It comprises four suits of eight cards each (King, Queen, Knight, Jack, and in Hearts and Diamonds from Ace to 4, in Spades and Clubs from 7 to 10), plus twenty-two trump cards. The trumps depict scenes of outdoor life in various countries. Both the trumps and the court cards are double-ended, and each trump displays a different scene at each end. The trumps are numbered with Roman numerals. Trump no. II invariably shows, at one end, a crowned eagle holding a sword in its claw, perched on a rock inscribed *Industrie und Glück*. The Fool, the unnumbered trump, is always represented as a stage musician.

Three patterns of these *Tarock* cards are known, distinguished by the illustration on Trump no. III. In Style A, Trump no. III depicts a well scene; in Style B, as in the present deck, a gondolier scene; and in Style C, a soldier with a sheaf of corn. The remaining trumps portray figures in regional and national costumes engaged in various occupational and leisure activities. Displaying a distinctly international character, the cards feature sultans smoking pipes, peasants at work in the fields, and Scotsmen mingling with Danes.

The sequence and details of the trumps vary among the three styles, except for card no. I, which in all versions depicts, at one end, a young boy dancing with a zither or harp and, at the other, a young girl dancing with a tambourine.

The Austrian *Tarocks* are widely regarded as the most exquisite among the *work and play* tarot decks produced in Europe.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use; overall a good deck.

REFERENCES: K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of The World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, pp. 137-140; P. ENDEBROCK, *Playing-card Pages* website; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 105-108.



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1900

THE «AUSTRIAN TAROCK PATTERN TYPE C»
AMONG THE FINEST OF THE «WORK-AND-PLAY» TAROTS

12. [TAROT]. *Austrian Tarock Deck*, Wien: Ferdinand Piatnik & Söhne, 1900.

54/54 tarot cards (114 x 62 mm), chromolithography, card backs decorated with a double-ended neoclassical design, rounded corners, French suits. Tax stamp and printer's device *Ferd. Piatnik & Söhne A.G. – Wien – Registrierte Schutzmarke* on the *Ace of Hearts*, and *Ferd. Piatnik & Söhne A.G.* on the *Jack of Diamonds*. Original box titled "The Finest Ladie-Tarok" [sic].

€ 1.100

This deck belongs to the pattern known as *Austrian Tarock Pattern Type C*. It comprises four suits of eight cards each (King, Queen, Knight, Jack, and in Hearts and Diamonds from Ace to 4, in Spades and Clubs from 7 to 10), plus twenty-two trump cards. The trumps depict scenes of outdoor life in various countries. Both the trumps and the court cards are double-ended, and each trump presents a different scene at either end. The trumps are numbered with Roman numerals. Trump no. II invariably depicts, at one end, a crowned eagle holding a sword in its claw, perched on a rock inscribed *Industrie und Glück*. The Fool, the unnumbered trump, is always represented as a stage musician.

Three patterns of these *Tarock* cards are known, distinguished by the illustration on Trump no. III. In Style A, Trump no. III depicts a well scene; in Style B, a gondolier scene; and in Style C, as in the present deck, a soldier with a sheaf of corn. The remaining trumps portray figures in regional and national costumes engaged in a variety of occupational and leisure activities. With its distinctly international character, the deck features sultans smoking pipes, peasants at work in the fields, and Scotsmen mingling with Danes. The sequence and iconographic details of the trumps vary among the three styles, except for card no. I, which in all versions depicts, at one end, a young boy dancing with a zither or harp, and at the other, a young girl dancing with a tambourine.

The *Austrian Tarocks* are widely regarded as the most exquisite among the *work and play* tarot decks produced in Europe.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of The World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, pp. 137-140; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 105-108, P. ENDEBROCK, *Playing-card Pages* website.



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1912

TURIN MANUFACTURE AND THE PIEDMONTESE TAROT TRADITION

13. [TAROT]. *Tarocchi Piemontesi*, Turin: Cesare Jona, ca. 1912.

78/78 cards (103 × 62 mm), chromolithographic printing in colour on card stock, with rounded corners. Versos with repeating geometric pattern in multiple shades of green. Ace of Coins bearing the maker's circular cartouche with imprint "CESARE JONA TORINO" and addresses, Italian fiscal stamp "REGNO D'ITALIA, CENTESIMI 50", and circular date stamp "11 OTT. 1912".

€ 900

This complete early-twentieth-century Piedmontese Tarot represents a mature phase of Turin card manufacture, combining industrial chromolithographic production with a firmly conserved regional iconography. While Italian playing-card production at the time was increasingly standardised and centralised, this deck remains closely tied to the Piedmontese tradition through its canonical imagery and the explicit localisation expressed by the maker's imprint and multiple Turin addresses. The structure adheres to the established 78-card Piedmontese model, closely related to the Tarot de Marseille yet adapted for local gaming practice rather than esoteric use. In Piedmont, tarot functioned primarily as a socially embedded card game, and the clarity of design, court hierarchy and trump sequence reflects this practical orientation. The Ace of Coins assumes a documentary role, concentrating fiscal, commercial and distributive information on a single card, an eloquent witness to the regulated economy of card production and circulation in post-Unification Italy. Cesare Jona emerges as a representative yet distinctive figure of Turin's early twentieth-century graphic industry, adopting modern colour lithography while subtly updating traditional patterns. The presence of the original tax stamp and date mark situates the deck precisely within the final years of the Kingdom of Italy's historic card-tax system, lending the pack particular documentary and collecting significance as a complete, well-preserved example of regional continuity within an industrial context.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use; overall a good deck.

PROVENANCE: 1. Tax Stamp "Regno d'Italia Centesimi 50" used in Italy from 1883 to 1914; Mercury facing left.

REFERENCES: S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 387-390; K. WOVK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 133-136; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 31-34, 52.



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1916

THE «MATTO» FACING LEFT: A RARE VARIANT IN A «PIEDMONTESE TAROT»
BY FAUSTINO SOLESIO, BEARING THE 1916–22 «MONOPOLI SEAL»

14. [TAROT]. *Piedmontese Tarot*. Genoa: Faustino Solesio, 1916.

78/78 cards (110 × 65 mm), printed in chromolithography with hand-stenciled colouring in red, blue, yellow, green, and black. Standard *Tarocco Piemontese* pattern, IPCS *Pattern Sheet 4, IT-1.211*, double-headed, with Italian titles and Arabic numerals on the trumps. Backs decorated with a diagonal green-and-black plaid design. The Ace of Coins bears a large medallion inscribed “*Faustino Solesio Genova*”, framed by polychrome ornament, and overprinted with a rare fiscal stamp of the transitional *Ministero Finanze – D.G. Monopoli* type (without denomination), depicting an allegorical female bust. The Two of Cups repeats the same inscription in bold capitals.

€ 1.500

This deck represents a fine example of the *Tarocco Piemontese* as produced in Genoa by Faustino Solesio around 1916, yet it stands out for two exceptional features.

First, the Ace of Coins carries the scarce *Monopoli* fiscal seal, introduced during the short-lived state monopoly on playing cards (1916–1922). During this period, tax was incorporated into the retail price and was no longer expressed on the stamp itself. Owing to its brief circulation and its replacement in 1922 by restored value-based stamps of 3 and 5 Lire, the *Monopoli* type is now particularly rare.

Secondly, the Fool (“Il Matto”) is uniquely depicted facing left, whereas in all other known Piedmontese tarots of the period the figure consistently faces right. This inversion appears to be unique to Solesio’s workshop and remains unrecorded in the principal bibliographical sources. It may result from a reversed lithographic transfer or, more plausibly, from a deliberate variant intended to distinguish Solesio’s production.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved

PROVENANCE: Ace of Coins overprinted with the fiscal stamp “*Ministero Finanze – D.G. Monopoli*”, in use from 1916 to 1922.

REFERENCES: S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*. Vol. II, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 387–390; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 133–136; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 31–34, 52.

1916

ITALIAN «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESE» IPCS PATTERN SHEET 4

15. [TAROT]. *Tarocchi Piemontesi*. Genova: Armanino, 1916.

78/78 cards (10,3 x 6,2 cm), chromolithographically printed in colour, with rounded corners. Backs decorated with a geometric pattern in multiple shades of green.

€ 1.100

The deck follows the traditional Italian suits: *Spade* (Swords), *Bastoni* (Bats), *Coppe* (Cups), and *Denari* (Coins), with the characteristic interlacing of Swords and Bats typical of this regional pattern. This deck conforms to the *Tarocco Piemontese* type, identified as Pattern Sheet 4, originally catalogued as *IT-1.211* by the International Playing-Card Society. The structure comprises 56 suit cards, each containing four court figures (King, Queen, Knight, and Valet) and ten numeral cards. These are accompanied by 21 double-ended trumps (*atouts*, *atutti* in Italian), numbered from I to XXI, and an additional card, *Il Matto* (The Fool), numbered 0. The Ace of Coins bears the imprint *Stabilimento Fratelli Armanino – Genova*.

THE STABILIMENTO FRATELLI ARMANINO was among the foremost Italian playing-card manufacturers of the early twentieth century. The Ligurian family firm had been active in Genoa since the nineteenth century before relocating its principal operations to Rome. Specializing in lithographic and chromolithographic production, Armanino became renowned for the brilliance and durability of its printing. Its catalogue encompassed a wide range of regional patterns, Piedmontese, Lombard, Genoese, and Neapolitan, alongside tarot decks and internationally oriented games such as poker and bridge.

Armanino's efficient distribution network ensured nationwide circulation, establishing the firm as a major competitor to Modiano and Masenghini.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: 1. Tax Stamp *Regno d'Italia Centesimi 80*; these are stamps used from 1914 to 1917. 2. Date stamp *19 Mag. 1916*.

REFERENCES: S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 387-390; K. WOKW, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 133-136; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 31-34, 52.



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1924
THE «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESE»

16. [TAROT]. *Tarocchi Piemontesi*, Turin: Viassone, 1924.

78/78 tarot cards (108 x 64 mm), chromolithographically printed in colour; backs decorated with geometric patterns in various shades of green; rounded corners.

€ 900



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A COMPLETE DECK OF THE «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESE», showing the traditional Italian suits: *Spade* (Swords), *Bastoni* (Bats), *Coppe* (Cups), and *Denari* (Coins), with the characteristic interlacing of Swords and Bats typical of this regional design. The structure comprises 56 suit cards, each with four court figures (King, Queen, Knight, and Valet) and ten numeral cards per suit. These are accompanied by 21 double-ended trumps (*atouts*, *atutti* in Italian), numbered I–XXI, and the additional card *Il Matto* (The Fool), numbered 0.

The trumps and courts are captioned in Italian. Arabic numerals are used on the trumps and on the suits of Cups and Coins, while Roman numerals appear on Swords and Bats. The Ace of Cups depicts a chalice filled with flowers, and the Fool portrays a figure facing a butterfly, departing from earlier iconography where the Fool is pursued by a wild animal. The Ace of Coins bears the maker's imprint: *Alessandro Viassone – Torino – Corso Re Umberto – Via Caboto*.

Although Italy is the cradle of tarot games, such as the *Minchiate Fiorentine*, the *Tarocco Piemontese* derives from a later reintroduction of the French *Tarot de Marseille*, from which it takes its overall structure and style. A related type, the *Tarocco Lombardo*, retains single-ended court figures, whereas the Piedmontese version adopted double-headed designs from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Unlike the French model, however, the Piedmontese double courts are divided by a horizontal rather than a diagonal axis, a distinctive feature that also separates them from the Genoese variant.

CONDITIONS: A used deck; overall in good condition.

PROVENANCE: Ace of Coins bearing the fiscal stamp *Regno d'Italia – Lire Tre* with Mercury facing left. The 3-lire stamp depicting Mercury was introduced following the post-war fiscal reform enacted by Royal Decree No. 3277 (30 December 1923), which reclassified the tax on playing cards as a stamp duty. The duty was set at 3 lire per pack for ordinary decks and 5 lire for luxury editions.

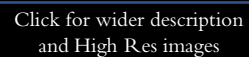
REFERENCES: S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 387–390; K. WOKW, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 133–136; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 31–34, 52.

78/78 tarot cards (105 × 55 mm) printed in black and white, rounded corners, versos entirely blank. The rectos display only the printed outlines of the designs, without any application of colours, and preserve visible guidelines used for alignment and cutting. The structure conforms to the canonical Ligure–Piedmontese tarot: 22 trumps and 56 suit cards (*Swords, Batons, Cups, and Coins*), comprising both numeral and court cards. The Ace of Coins bears the family motto *A Todos Alumbra*.

This deck represents an uncoloured proof state of the Piedmontese “Della Rocca” type, produced in Genoa by the Solesio workshop. Its distinctive characteristics, the absence of stencil colouring, the retention of cutting guidelines, and the blank backs, clearly indicate that it was never meant for commercial circulation but rather originated as a printer’s proof or prototype.

It is among the very few historical decks preserved in an “unfinished” state, comparable only to Solesio’s own archival proofs.

REFERENCES: S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, U.S. Games Systems, 1986; F. MAZZEI, *Le carte da gioco, il Finale e la famiglia Solesio*, Savona: Comune di Finale, 2007; World of Playing Cards, *Solesio Family*, Genova.



1933

ITALIAN «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESI» IPCS PATTERN SHEET 4

18. [TAROT]. *Tarocchi Piemontesi*. Rome: Armanino, 1933.

78/78 tarot cards (10,8 x 6,5 cm), chromolithographically printed in colours; backs decorated with an orange-and-green geometric pattern; rounded corners.

€ 900



A COMPLETE DECK OF THE «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESI», featuring the traditional Italian suits: *Spade* (Swords), *Bastoni* (Bats), *Coppe* (Cups), and *Denari* (Coins), with the characteristic interlacing of Swords and Batons typical of this regional design. The structure comprises 56 suit cards, each with four court figures (King, Queen, Knight, and Valet) and ten numeral cards, and 21 double-ended trumps (*atouts*, *atutti* in Italian) numbered I–XXI, together with an additional card, *Il Matto* (The Fool), numbered 0. The Ace of Coins bears the imprint *Stabilimento Fratelli Armanino – Roma*. The deck also includes an advertising card for the *Fratelli Cerutti* firm of Turin, exclusive distributors of the Armanino brand.

These tarot cards correspond to the Tarocco Piemontese pattern, identified as *Pattern Sheet 4* and originally catalogued as *IT-1.211* by the International Playing-Card Society.

The STABILIMENTO FRATELLI ARMANINO of Rome was among the foremost Italian playing-card manufacturers during the first half of the twentieth century. The company traced its origins to the Ligurian Armanino family, active in Genoa since the 19th century, before transferring its main operations to Rome. There, the firm specialized in lithographic and chromolithographic printing of exceptional quality, producing decks notable for their vivid colours and durability, which set them apart from competitors.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use; overall, a very good deck.

PROVENANCE: 1. Tax Stamp *Regno d'Italia Lire tre*, used from 1925 to 1943. 2. Date stamp *Mag. 1933*.

REFERENCES: S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 387–390; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 133–136; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 31–34, 52.

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and High Res images

1944–1945
 ITALIAN «PIEDMONTESE DELLA ROCCA» TAROT
 FOR THE YEARS OF THE ITALIAN SOCIAL REPUBLIC

19. [TAROT]. *Tarocchi Piemontesi*. Genoa: Faustino Solesio, 1944–1945.

78/78 cards (105 x 55 mm), chromolithographically printed; backs decorated with a diagonal green pattern; rounded corners.

€ 1.100

A COMPLETE DECK OF «MODERN PIEMONTESE PATTERN», featuring the traditional Italian suits: *Spade* (Swords), *Bastoni* (Batons), *Coppe* (Cups), and *Denari* (Coins), with the characteristic interlacing of Swords and Batons typical of this design. The structure comprises 56 suit cards, four court figures (King, Queen, Knight, and Valet) and ten numeral cards in each suit, together with 21 double-ended trumps (*atouts*, *atutti* in Italian) numbered I–XXI, and the additional card *Il Matto* (The Fool), numbered 0. The trumps are captioned in Italian, and both trumps and suits are numbered with Arabic numerals, placed within or above a small device symbolising the suit. The Ace of Coins bears the inscription *Faustino Solesio – Genova – Casa fondata nel 1774* (“House founded in 1774”) along with a fiscal stamp.

This wartime edition exemplifies the persistence of Solesio’s Ligurian workshop during the turbulent years of the Second World War. The *Modern Piemontese* design continued to represent the standard Italian tarot pattern well into the mid-twentieth century, retaining the iconographic vocabulary established by nineteenth-century Piedmontese decks.

CONDITIONS: Unused, perfectly preserved.



PROVENANCE: Ace of Coins bearing a rare fiscal stamp inscribed “IX – Lire Tre.” This stamp was employed during 1944–1945, when northern Italy was governed by the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* (RSI), which issued its own fiscal markings. Contrary to common misinterpretation, the Roman numeral did not indicate the Fascist year but denoted the city of issue: *XII* for Milan, *XIII* for Trento, and *IX*—as on this deck—for Genoa.

REFERENCES: S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, U.S. Games Systems, 1986; P. ENDEBROCK, *Playing-card Pages* website.



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 and High Res images



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1944-45

ITALIAN «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESE» IPCS PATTERN SHEET 4
PRINTED IN WARTIME ITALY; SOLD IN THE ORIGINAL BOX IN 1949

20. [TAROT]. *Tarocchi Piemontesi*. Bergamo: Masenghini di R. Lombardini, 1944-45, with retail date stamp “Ott. 1949”.

78/78 cards (105 x 63 mm), chromolithographically printed in colour; backs decorated with a geometric pattern in various shades of green; rounded corners.

€ 700

A COMPLETE DECK OF THE «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESE», featuring the Italian suits: *Spade* (Swords), *Bastoni* (Batons), *Coppe* (Cups), and *Denari* (Coins), with the characteristic interlacing of Swords and Batons typical of this pattern. The structure includes 56 suit cards, each with four court figures (King, Queen, Knight, and Valet) and ten numeral cards, plus 21 double-ended trumps (*atouts*, *atutti* in Italian) numbered I-XXI, and the additional card *Il Matto* (The Fool), numbered 0.

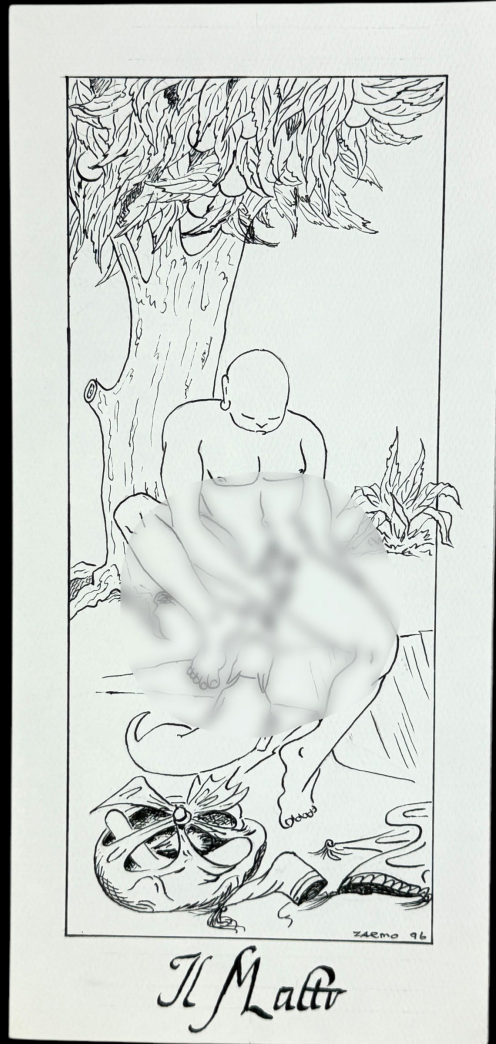
The Ace of Coins bears the imprint *Masenghini di R. Lombardini – Bergamo – Ott. 1949*. The deck is preserved in its original printed box, labelled “*arocco Piemontese da 78 carte – Masenghini di R. Lombardini*”, with a retailer’s sticker from a Genoese stationery shop. The box displays the word *telate* (“linen-textured”) on one side, and an image of Triumph No. 16, *La Torre*, printed in red on the other.

These tarot cards belong to the Tarocco Piemontese type, identified as *Pattern Sheet 4* and originally classified as *IT-1.211* by the International Playing-Card Society.

CONDITIONS: Cards slightly warped from handling; overall in very good condition; box complete and well preserved.

PROVENANCE: 1. Tax Stamp *Regno d'Italia Lire 100*; these are stamps used from 1949 to 1954. 2. Date stamp ‘Ott. 1949’, indicating that the deck was sold four years after production, after the ‘Masenghini di R. Lombardini’ imprint (used from 1944 to 1945) had already ceased.

REFERENCES: S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. I, U.S. Games Systems, 1978, p. 263; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 133-136; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 31-34, 52; The International Playing-Card Society.



[Click to see the erotic image](#)

(Disclaimer: Some of the following images depict erotic scenes, presented with artistic intent. They may offend the sensibilities of some viewers and should only be viewed by informed and consenting adults)

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1996

FROM ALLEGORY TO EROS:
A HAND-DRAWN TAROT IN THE ITALIAN–MARSEILLE TRADITION

21. [TAROT]. ZARMO. *Tarocchi erotici*. Italy: 1996.

Complete series of twenty-three hand-drawn plates (300 × 160 mm), comprising the twenty-one Major Arcana (I–XXI), *Il Matto* (The Fool), and one unnumbered introductory plate. Executed in black ink with pen and brush on textured drawing paper, each sheet with generous margins. Every plate bears its title in Italian, written in a consistent cursive hand, with Roman numerals following the Marseille convention (e.g., *XVIII* for *Il Sole*), and the signature *ZARMO '96* at the lower right. The series is uniform in paper tone, texture, and ink, confirming its unity as an autograph work. No printed elements, publisher's marks, or fiscal stamps are present.

€ 3.000

An original erotic reinterpretation of the Major Arcana of the Italian–Marseille tarot, entirely hand-drawn and signed *Zarmo '96*. Each Arcane transforms classical allegory into an explicitly erotic tableau while retaining the traditional symbolic hierarchy of the tarot. The result is a synthesis of esoteric iconography, erotic illustration, and disciplined draftsmanship, combining satire, sensuality, and formal refinement. Unique and unrecorded in bibliographic or auction sources, the corpus exemplifies the 1990s Italian revival of tarot as a medium of artistic expression and erotic allegory.

The titles and numbering follow the canonical order (*Giustizia VIII*, *Forza XI*, *Il Sole XVIII*). The series opens with a horizontally oriented introductory plate depicting a reclining nude female figure surrounded by ornamental motifs and tendrils, serving as a symbolic frontispiece to the suite.

The Zarmo '96 corpus belongs to the prolific Italian revival of tarot art in the late twentieth century, when publishers such as Lo Scarabeo (Turin) reimagined the tarot as a vehicle for thematic and aesthetic experimentation. Erotic interpretations emerged as a distinct subgenre, paralleling the adult-comic tradition of Milo Manara, Giacinto Gaudenzi, and Luca Raimondo. Unlike printed decks, however, Zarmo's hand-drawn series exists as a unique artistic portfolio, closer to an erotic ex-voto or an illuminated manuscript than to a product of industrial printmaking. Its iconography remains rigorously aligned with the Marseille system while introducing postmodern irony and overt sensuality.

CONDITIONS: Unused.

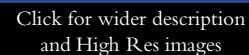
Games and Divination Decks

48/48 cards (110 × 75 mm), comprising 36 progressive theoretical lessons and 12 musical examples, printed on one side only; verso blank. Cards numbered in Roman numerals I–XLVIII. Printed in black, with French text, engraved staves and musical notation, and typographic ornaments. Plates attributed to Pierre-François Godard (1768–1838). Preserved in the lower portion of the original publisher's box (approx. 112 × 77 mm), covered in marbled paper with printed label on the underside bearing the Paris imprint "*Chez A.-A. Renouard... et Nicolle...*" and the anchor-and-serpent printer's device.

This rare educational card set was designed to teach children the rudiments of musical theory through play. It forms the twelfth instalment in the celebrated series of *Jeux instructifs* created by the dramatist Étienne de Jouy and issued in Paris by Renouard and Nicolle during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Each card presents a concise, progressive lesson covering clefs, scales, accidentals, intervals, rhythm, and exercises, culminating in short solfeggio passages. Conceived simultaneously as a didactic tool and parlor game, the deck reflects the Enlightenment and Napoleonic ideals of universal education, intended *à l'instruction de la jeunesse des deux sexes*.

CONDITIONS: Scattered foxing and minor edge wear to the cards; upper part of the box missing; lower part rubbed, with partial loss to the label.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, p. 66; British Museum, *Catalogue of the Lady Charlotte Schreiber Collection of Playing Cards*, London: 1901, no. 176.





N.º 116

23. [GAME]. BREPOLS, PHILIPPUS JACOBUS. *Floskaartjes No. 116*. Turnhout (Belgium): Brepols, 1836.

Uncut woodcut broadside (295 × 370 mm) printed on laid paper, hand-coloured by stencil in a restrained palette of red-brown, green, yellow, and blue. It comprises thirty-six images arranged in six horizontal rows of six, each image measuring approximately 52 × 40 mm, within a fine black border and individually numbered from 36 down to 1. Beneath the last image appears the printed legend *No. 116*. Verso blank, no watermark or visible tax stamp. The sheet bears no marginal captions or moral quatrains at the head, and each block carries its individual caption (for instance, *Bisschopsvrouw* for figure 31) immediately above the vignette. These features clearly indicate the first edition of the broadsheet, distinguishing it from all subsequent issues.

€ 2.000

Floskaartjes No. 116 is an allegorical moral print in the tradition of the *Danse Macabre*, rendered in didactic form. It presents thirty-six ranked personifications, from emperor down to servant, culminating in *Life* and *Death*. Though not a playing-card deck in the conventional sense, it served a dual purpose of entertainment and moral instruction, typical of Flemish *centsprenten* or *mannekenbladen*. Its importance lies in its role as an early example of mass-market moral imagery and as a precursor to nineteenth-century educational card games.

The work consists of eighteen male–female pairs, each representing a rung of the social hierarchy. The sequence begins with *Keizer / Keizerin* (Emperor / Empress), then *Koning / Koningin* (King / Queen), followed by ecclesiastical rank (*Bisschop / Bisschopsvrouw*), secular nobility (*Prins / Prinses, Heer / Dame*), civic and military offices (*Kapitein / Kapiteinsvrouw, Burgemeester / Burgemeestersvrouw*), and continues down through artisans, farmers, and servants. The penultimate figures are *'t Leven* (Life), showing a child blowing soap bubbles as a symbol of ephemeral existence, and *De Dood* (Death), depicting a skeleton with scythe and hourglass. Each image bears a Dutch caption above or beside the figure. The numbering (36 → 1) appears in the upper left corner of each block.

The absence of any suit or pip system distinguishes it from playing cards. Instead, the sequence is linear and allegorical, functioning as a visual meditation on mortality and social order.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: M. DE MEYER, *Volksprenten uit de 19de eeuw in Vlaanderen*, Leuven: Davidsfonds, 1980. pp. 94–97; P. VAN HEURCK, *Les images populaires flamandes*, Anvers: De Sikkels, 1930. pp. 212–215.

24. [DIVINATION DECK]. *De Waarzegster Mlle. Lenormand* [« Petit Jeu de Mlle. Lenormand »]. Koblenz: Johann Baptist Rühl, ca. 1850.

36/36 divinatory cards (75 × 45 mm) lithographed and partially hand-coloured. Each card bears, at the top, its progressive number from 1 to 36 together with the indication of the corresponding French-suit playing card. The principal image, occupying half the card, depicts an allegorical or symbolic subject rendered in a naïve style, with simplified outlines and restrained colouring. The backs are uniformly decorated in a cream tone, embellished with a fine pattern of small ornamental dots. The deck is preserved with its contemporary instruction booklet, entitled *De Waarzegster Mlle. Lenormand*, in Dutch, with a woodcut on the title page depicting the fortune-teller in the act of displaying the cards.

€ 1.600

The thirty-six cards reproduce the figures established in the tradition of the *Petit Lenormand*. The iconographic programme is simple and direct: the Dog signifies fidelity, the Heart love, the Cross destiny or burden. Each card presents an easily recognizable scene, often drawn from daily life or archetypal symbols, enabling an immediate mental association between image and divinatory meaning.

The clarity of these figures, together with their correspondence to the French suits, constituted the strength of this divinatory system, which achieved wide success in Central Europe. This coherence, combined with the uncluttered imagery, free of superfluous elements, made the *Petit Lenormand* a versatile instrument, equally suited to social play and to esoteric practice. The language of images spoke both to an educated audience familiar with occult traditions and to a popular readership seeking straightforward answers to daily concerns, a quality that ensured the deck's enduring diffusion.

CONDITIONS: Slightly warped cards; overall, perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 149, 155, 356; Peter Endebrock, 2021; H. R. D'ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIV au XX siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906; W. GURNEY BENHAM, *History of the Pack and Explanations of Its Many Secrets*, Read Books, 2019; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, 1983, p. 142.



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1880-1910

BOURGEOIS DIVINATION IN LATE NINETEENTH-AND EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY
THURINGIA: A PERFECTLY PRESERVED EDITION OF THE «LENORMAND ORACLE»

25. [DIVINATION DECK]. *Lenormand-Wahrsagespiel zu 36 Blättern*. Altenburg (Thuringia): Alten-burger Spielkartenfabrik (ASS), ca. 1880–1910.

36/36 chromolithographed oracle cards (90 × 60 mm), printed on stiff card with square corners. The fronts are printed in polychrome chromolithography, the backs in sepia with a decorative design showing a symbolic composition of allegorical and mythological motifs, including owls, grotesques, crowned figures, and a radiant pillar within a vegetal frame, bearing the imprint *Gesetzlich geschützt*. The original paper slipcase, decorated in sepia with floral ornaments and inscribed *Lenormand-Wahrsagespiel – 36 Blatt* on the side panel, is preserved. Accompanied by the original explanatory leaflet (pp. 4, folded) titled *Erklärung der 36 Karten*, printed in German, providing a description of each card and instructions for use in divination, including an example of a spread. The card fronts combine French-suited indices in the upper corners with emblematic figures of the *Lenormand* oracle.

€ 1.000

The *Lenormand* oracle is rooted in early nineteenth-century French fascination with cartomancy and domestic divination, largely associated with Mlle. Lenormand, the celebrated fortune-teller of the Napoleonic era. German-speaking lands proved particularly receptive to the *Petit Lenormand*, where it was domesticated as an instrument of bourgeois amusement and female domestic culture, straddling the line between superstition and popular psychology. Altenburg, already renowned for its playing-card manufacture, integrated this format into chromolithographic production, allowing for wide circulation at low cost. The combination of French indices with emblematic imagery reflects a hybridization between traditional playing-card semiotics and modern symbolic systems, mirroring the nineteenth-century impulse to codify and institutionalize popular divination. The elaborate allegorical back design, with its grotesques and crowned figures, further exemplifies the artistic refinement of German chromolithography during this period, lending an air of dignity and mystery to what was, at heart, a commercial oracle.

CONDITIONS: Excellent, bright impressions with minimal wear, box slightly worn at the edges.

PROVENANCE: Card no. 28 (*Der Herr*, the Gentleman) bears the embossed imperial German tax stamp: “DEUTSCHES REICH – NO. 90” representing the competent tax office of Altenburg in Thuringia.

REFERENCES: K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 129-143; F. A. FOURNIER, *Los Naipes*, Museo Fournier, Vitoria, 1882, p. 193, no. 225.

1890

THE MOST WIDELY USED DIVINATION DECK AFTER TAROT

26. [DIVINATION DECK]. *Grand Jeu de Mlle Le Normand*. Paris: Grimaud, ca. 1890.

54/54 (128 x 90 mm) chromolithographed on thick card stock, with French suit marks. Each card, except for the Querent cards, presents a variety of zodiacal, classical, and modern images. In the upper left corner appears a miniature playing card illustration, while the upper right bears a letter of the alphabet. The two Querent cards, depicting a man and a woman, show figures dressed in seventeenth-century attire. Card backs decorated with violet geometric designs; corners rounded.

€ 1.100

The *Grand Jeu de Mlle Lenormand* takes its name from the celebrated French bookseller, necromancer, fortune-teller, and cartomancer Marie-Anne Lenormand.

The deck is renowned for its intricate and intellectual iconography, comprising complex scenes drawn from Greek mythology. Each card embodies multiple symbolic layers, incorporating references to astrology, alchemy, and divination.

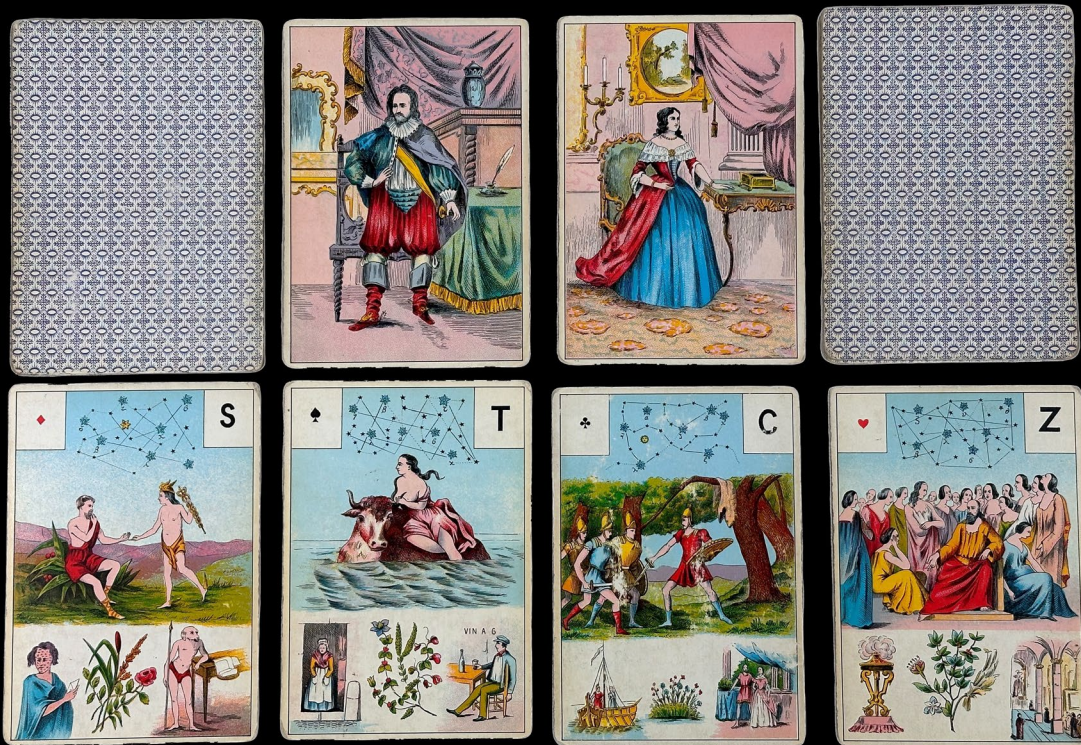
Each card features:

- a playing card reference;
- an astrological sign or constellation;
- a letter of the alphabet;
- a central image depicting a specific scene from Greek mythology;
- two smaller vignettes in the lower corners;
- and a flower motif at the bottom centre.

The principal elements for divination are the central image and the two smaller scenes, while the remaining symbols provide additional interpretative context and nuance.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use; overall, in excellent condition.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021; W. GURNEY BENHAM, *History of the Pack and Explanations of Its Many Secrets*, Read Books, 2019. P. ENDEBROCK Website.



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1899

UNOPENED EXAMPLE IN ORIGINAL WRAPPING
THE FIRST INTEGRATION OF CARTOMANCY AND CHIROMANCY
INTO A NEW DIVINATION TOOL



The photograph above shows the actual deck offered here. Because the pack remains sealed in its original wrapping, it has not been opened for inspection. The subsequent detail images are drawn from bibliographic and reference sources and are reproduced solely for descriptive and documentary purposes; they do not depict the present copy.

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27. [DIVINATION DECK]. *Nouveau Jeu de la main*. Paris: Grimaud, ca. 1899.

59/59 chromolithographic cards (117 × 62 mm), comprising 56 regular cards plus 3 coloured Querent cards. Preserved in the original box with printed label and inner sleeve, still fully sealed in the publisher's transparent wrapping, never opened. As such, the internal structure of the deck is known from bibliographical sources, but the cards themselves have not been individually inspected. Backs with the characteristic green spiral pattern (straight corners), printed on thick card stock. Card no. 55 bears the reference *Chiromancie nouvelle par Adèle Moreau (élève de Mlle Lenormand) et de A. de Para d'Hermès*.

[TOGETHER WITH:]

[BOOK]. A. MOREAU. *L'Avenir dévoilé dans le nouveau grand jeu chiromancique des formes, lignes et signes de mains par Adèle Moreau, élève de Mlle Le Normand, et A. de Para*. Paris, B.-P. Grimaud, 54, Rue de Lancry, 54, ca. 1899.

8vo (118 x 75 mm), original paper wrappers with printed title on front cover, pp. 62.

€ 1.300

The *Jeu de la Main* is an exceptional divination deck created by the renowned nineteenth-century French cartomancer Adèle Moreau, uniquely combining three disciplines: chiromancy (palmistry), planetary astrology, and cartomancy. Comprising fifty-six intricately designed cards, the deck interprets the lines and shapes of the human hand, explores the symbolic energies associated with celestial bodies, and incorporates familiar motifs drawn from traditional cartomancy. Adorned with Belle Époque-inspired illustrations, the deck reflects the aesthetic sensibilities of its era while conveying rich symbolic and esoteric meaning. The accompanying booklet explains the significance of each card and describes in detail the divinatory techniques used with this unique system.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved in the original sealed box, with the original instruction booklet.

REFERENCES: F. A. FOURNIER, *Los Naipes-Museo Fournier*, Spain, no. 174; P. ENDEBROCK, *Playing-card Pages* website; BNF, Frbnf43589290.

Gallica: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10543190d>



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1907

AN ELEGANT LIBERTY-STYLE «MERCANTE IN FIERA» DECK
WITH THREE-LANGUAGE CAPTIONS AND ORNAMENTAL BACKS

28. [GAME]. BARELLI, NAPOLEONE. *Mercante in Fiera*. Milan: Napoleone P. Barelli, Galleria De Cristoforis 4–7, 1907.

120/120 cards (95 × 60 mm), chromolithographically printed on sturdy card stock. The game comprises two identical half-packs of 60 unique subjects each, distinguished by their backs: one printed in deep red, the other in cobalt blue, both featuring elaborate ornamental designs of vegetal scrolls and cartouches, signed “Pietro Barelli – Milano” at the centre.

The fronts display finely executed chromolithographic illustrations, each card showing a single figure, animal, or object, accompanied by captions in three languages: Italian, French, and German. The title card reads “Napoleone P. Barelli Editore – Milano, Galleria De Cristoforis 4, 5, 6, 7”.

€ 800

This early-twentieth-century edition of *Mercante in Fiera*, published by Barelli in Milan, stands among the first Italian chromolithographic interpretations of the popular game. Characterized by its trilingual captions and refined Liberty-style graphics, it was clearly conceived for a cosmopolitan audience. The presence of the official fiscal stamp dated 11 January 1907 provides a precise chronological anchor and situates the production within the context of Giolittian Italy’s fiscal regulation of gaming materials.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use; a good deck.

PROVENANCE: Italian fiscal stamp of the “Regno d’Italia”, denomination “centesimi 50,” depicting Mercury facing left, cancelled with the round ink stamp “Ufficio del Bollo Milano, 11 gennaio 1907.”

REFERENCES: H. R. D’ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIVE au XXe siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, London, Arco Publications, 1966; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Cambridge, Lutterworth Press, 1983; ASSOCIAZIONE 7BELLO, *Catalogo dei fabbricanti italiani di carte da gioco*, Milan, 7bello, 2000; A. VENTURI, *Le matrici Soliani e la raccolta Barelli*, Modena: Galleria Estense, 1887.



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1928

«MERCANTE IN FIERA» BETWEEN LIBERTY AND MODERNITY
A ROMAN EDITION OF A POPULAR ITALIAN GAME

29. [GAME]. *Il Mercante in Fiera*. Rome: Già Fratelli Armanino, 1928.

80/80 cards (95 × 60 mm), chromolithographically printed on medium-weight card stock. The deck consists of two identical half-packs of forty subjects each, distinguished by their ornamental backs printed respectively in deep red and in black. Both designs feature an elegant Art Nouveau composition with a female figure and putto emerging from acanthus scrolls, echoing the decorative vocabulary of early twentieth-century Italian graphics.

The card faces display finely coloured chromolithographic illustrations of animals, fruits, objects, and characters (e.g., *Lepre*, *Leone*, *Castello*, *Corazziere*, *Rosa*, *Bottiglie*), each accompanied by a concise Italian caption. The title card reads *Già Fratelli Armanino – Roma*.

€ 700

This Roman edition of *Il Mercante in Fiera*, produced by “Già Fratelli Armanino”, belongs to the mature phase of Italian chromolithographic printing between the two World Wars. The crisp yet vibrant execution reflects the persistence of late-Liberty iconographic models, while the simplified layout, limited to Italian captions, marks the decline of the multilingual ambitions that had distinguished earlier Milanese editions such as Barelli’s 1907 issue.

Within the broader genealogy of *Mercante in Fiera* decks, the Armanino edition occupies a transitional position between the artisanal chromolithographic productions of the late nineteenth century, for instance Smorti’s *Giuoco della Fiera*, 1879, rooted in Tuscan fairground imagery and the industrial offset-printed issues of the 1930s. Its iconography remains indebted to rural and bourgeois motifs, retaining the pedagogical tone characteristic of the genre, while the refined Art Nouveau backs reveal a distinct Roman sensibility toward ornamental design.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use; overall, a good deck.

PROVENANCE: Tax stamp *Regno d'Italia, Lire Tre*, profile of Mercury, cancelled *Ottobre 1928*; imprint *Già Fratelli Armanino – Roma*.

REFERENCES: H. R. D’ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIVe au XXe siècle*, Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1906; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, London, Arco Publications, 1966; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Cambridge, Lutterworth Press, 1983; ASSOCIAZIONE 7BELLO, *Catalogo dei fabbricanti italiani di carte da gioco*, Milan, 7bello, 2000.

Playing Cards



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1550

TWELVE PRINTED FRAGMENTS FROM A MID-SIXTEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN CARD DECK
WIDE-FORMAT «STUKELEY TYPE»

30. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Unidentified German Stukeley-Type Playing-Card Deck (fragments)*. Southern or central German workshop: 1550.

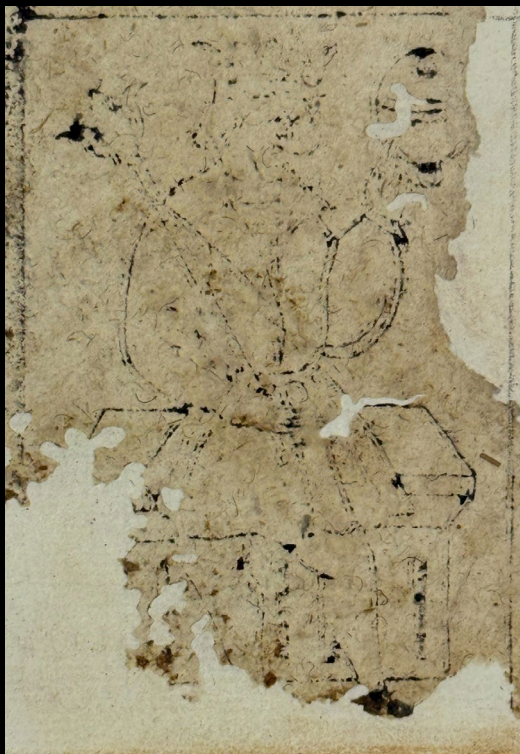
The surviving material consists of twelve fragments of playing cards (80 × 60 mm), uncut, affixed to three paper sheets (four fragments per sheet), each sheet mounted on a restoration backing card (170 × 110 mm). The fragments remain in their original relative layout as printed, untrimmed and unfolded. The cards were printed in black line woodcut, the outlines and details executed from woodblocks, and hand-coloured by stencil or direct brush, the standard technique of early German card printing, with colour now almost entirely faded. The pattern is classifiable within the *Stukeley type* (IPC classification) or early German *Ansbach/Nuremberg wide-type* pattern. The fragments show portions of pip cards (Hearts, Bells, Acorns), Knaves (Under and Over), and possibly Kings, recognizable by elements of costume or throne motifs. On one fragment, a partial inscription or motto in German (e.g. “Ach an dich...”) appears in black ink, probably integral to the printed design rather than a later addition, corresponding to motto fragments found on known Stukeley cards. There is no printer’s device or tax mark visible. Because the fragments represent less than a full deck, the original number of cards (likely forty-eight) is inferred from comparative examples. The dating (1500–1550) is based on comparison with securely dated *Stukeley-type* decks, such as the pack held in the British Museum (late fifteenth to early sixteenth century), and on the typological evolution of suit and court design.

€ 2.500

These fragments constitute a rare survival of a German *Stukeley-type* playing deck, likely produced in the first half of the sixteenth century. Although incomplete, they preserve crucial design features of the early German-suited tradition (*Hearts, Bells, Acorns, Leaves*) and display the characteristic two-step woodcut and stencil-colouring process of that era.

Their significance lies in supplementing existing examples, such as the *Stukeley Deck* in the British Museum, and in offering variant details, dress, motto fragments, and compositional nuances, that enrich our understanding of regional workshops and the iconographic development of early German card production.

From the surviving pieces it is possible to reconstruct the original structure: the deck probably followed the forty-eight-card German standard (pips 2–10, Under, Over, King), omitting Aces and Queens, a feature typical of early German patterns. The remaining fragments include portions of pip sequences (Hearts and Bells), a Knave in distinctive attire (a fragment showing a leg and part of a skirt), and decorative throne or heraldic elements suggesting a King’s card. The motto fragment aligns with phrases documented on other *Stukeley-type* decks (e.g. “Ach an dich und nicht mich...”), likely forming part of a paired inscription across two cards.



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and High Res images

Because only fragments remain, one cannot assert with certainty the full layout of suits or sequences, but the distribution of suit symbols suggests at least two Hearts, one Bell, and one Acorn fragment. The fragments on one sheet form a contiguous block from the original printed layout, preserving their relative placement so that the printed imposition can be partially reconstructed.

The German *Stukeley-type* cards derive their name from William Stukeley, who in 1763 exhibited a set of cards discovered in a bookbinding to the Society of Antiquaries, thus giving rise to the pattern's designation. The British Museum preserves what is known as the *Stukeley Cards*, a hand-coloured woodcut deck of forty-eight cards believed to have been printed in Germany in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

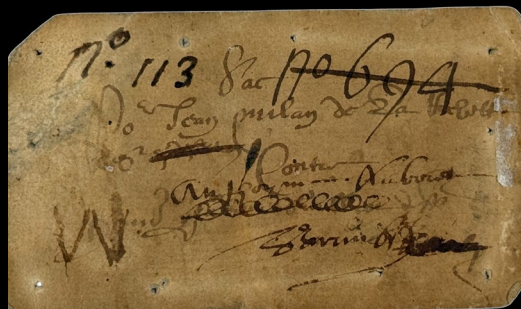
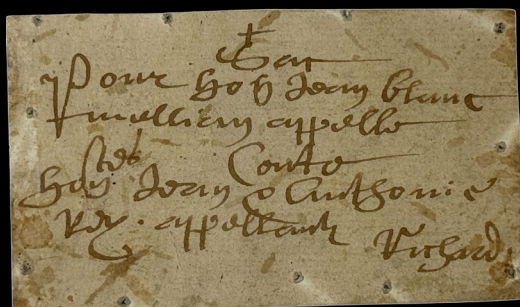
CONDITIONS: The twelve fragments survive in variable but generally fair condition, remarkable given their extreme age and fragile medium. The paper shows oxidation, surface abrasion, and occasional edge losses consistent with long exposure and early handling. The printed outlines remain partially legible, though in several fragments the pigments have faded or disappeared, leaving only faint traces of the original red and green stencil colouring. In certain areas, the black ink is abraded or blotched, and some lines have softened through wear. A few fragments display small tears, minor lacunae, and irregular trimming, yet no modern retouching or repainting is evident. The paper is now mounted on twentieth-century restoration boards for stabilization, an intervention that appears careful and fully reversible. No watermark, signature, or tax stamp is visible. Overall, the fragments are structurally stable, with designs discernible enough to allow iconographic identification, while preserving the patina and imperfections characteristic of sixteenth-century printed cards recovered in fragmentary state.

REFERENCES: Z. ŠÁHLAVSKÝ, *Stukeley-Type Playing-Cards in Prague*, Vol. 24, no. 2, 1996, pp. 32–49.

British Museum Collection Online, Playing-Card, Stukeley Cards:
https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1896-0501-522-

Early German Playing Cards, World of Playing Cards (WOPC):
<https://www.wopc.co.uk/germany/early-german-playing-cards>.

Playing Card Printing History, HistoricGames.com:
<https://www.historicgames.com/gamemakers/cardmaking.html>.



Dauphiné pattern, ca. 1650. The backs were used as labels sewn onto bags containing legal documents. The Jack card shows evidence of three separate reuses. Both cards retain rows of needle perforations along the edges, marks left from when they were stitched to the document bags.

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1650-1790

FROM THE GAMBLER'S HAND TO THE NOTARY'S DESK:
A COLLECTION OF FRENCH PLAYING CARDS REUSED AS WRITING SUPPORTS

AN EXCEPTIONAL CORPUS FOR HISTORICAL, BIBLIOGRAPHICAL,
AND TYPOGRAPHICAL STUDIES, BETWEEN WRITING, MEMORY, AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

31. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Collection of French reused playing cards with contemporary manuscripts on various subjects on the versos*. France: 1650-1790.

A remarkable corpus of 150 French playing cards produced between ca. 1650 and 1790 and later reused on the verso as labels, recipes, advertisements, library slips, and administrative notes. Beyond their value for the history of cardmaking, these cards document the secondary life of playing cards as durable writing supports in *Ancien Régime* France. Particularly notable are the seventeenth-century Dauphiné cards, the unique card attributed to Nicolas Lesage, the only known Bayeux example, and a comparative group of Jacks of Clubs that allows close study of regional variation. Taken together, the collection offers an exceptional intersection of material bibliography, social history, and the history of play.

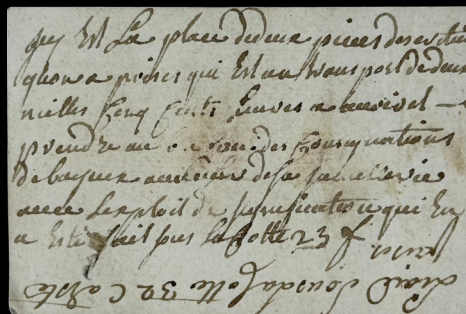
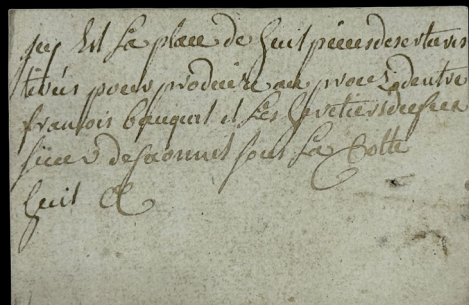
€ 12.000

- *Dauphiné Pattern*, unknown maker, ca. 1650: two stencil-coloured woodcut cards (King and Jack of Diamonds), reused as legal labels. *Dimensions*: King 92 × 53 mm; Jack 97 × 56 mm.
- *Paris Pattern*, Angers, J. Ducamus (or Ducanus), ca. 1780: Queen of Diamonds, single-figure stencil-coloured woodcut. The verso bears an advertisement for the Parisian clockmaker *Feuillade*. *Dimensions*: 83 × 56 mm.
- Approximately 60 further cards, predominantly 18th century or earlier:
 - Queen of Clubs, *Provence Pattern*.
 - Jack of Clubs, ca. 1740, N(icolas) Lesage of Caen.
 - King of Diamonds, *Cartes de Bayeux*, early 18th century.
 - Four cards with handwritten medical recipes.
 - Several cards annotated as credit reminders.
 - Two cards with printed labels, including *Madame la Comtesse de Besons*.
 - Educational cards from the *Bureau Typographique pour Commencants*.
 - Fifteen Jacks of Clubs, dating from the 18th to the 19th century, representing various regional types. Notably, the Jack of Clubs emerges as a model specimen for comparative studies of woodcut technique, iconographic variation, and stencil colouring, enabling reconstruction of regional specificities, standardization trends, and decorative continuities within the paper industry of the period.

ca. 1740 N(icolas) LESAGE, Caen
The *bluteau* reads (AL)A VICTOIRE
This is the only known example
of a card produced by this maker



Early 18th century “CARTES DE BAYEUX”
This card constitutes the only known evidence
of playing-card production in Bayeux.



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and High Res images

Beyond its value as a striking example of the secondary use of playing cards as writing material, the collection includes several items of outstanding importance in the history of European cardmaking:

- King and Jack of Diamonds, mid-seventeenth century, *Dauphiné Pattern*: cards of this type, especially from the seventeenth century, rank among the rarest and most significant survivals in early European playing cards.
- Jack of Clubs, ca. 1740, *Nicolas Lesage*: the only known example attributed to this maker.
- King of Diamonds, early eighteenth century, *Bayeux*: the sole surviving witness to playing-card production in that locality.
- Of particular note is an exceptional comparative group of fifteen Jacks of Clubs (1701–1770), illustrating the progressive evolution of this figure through distinct stylistic phases: *Type I* (1701–1718), *Type II* (1719–1746), *Type III* (1746–1750), and *Type IV* (1751–1778), corresponding to the evolution of fiscal stamp usage.
- A set of 86 eighteenth-century French court cards, Paris pattern, reused on the verso as library cards for a collection. Seventy-two cards were printed by Minot, while the remaining fourteen were produced by various eighteenth-century makers (Mandroux, Delatre, Lachapelle, Lefer).

In the 17th and 18th centuries France, playing cards transcended their gaming function, often reused as high-quality writing supports for documentary, administrative, or private purposes. Archival evidence reveals a wide spectrum of secondary uses, forming a genuine *phenomenology of reuse*. This diversity attests not only to the adaptability of these supports but also to the breadth of writing practices in a stratified society. The reuse of cards reflects both the diffusion of literacy among the middle and lower classes and the elite’s effort to economize valuable resources such as paper within bureaucratic and domestic contexts.

Common reuses included:

- *Bibliographic cards*, employed for compiling handwritten catalogues of books—particularly popular among Parisian bibliophiles in the late eighteenth century (over 200,000 such cards survive at the *Bibliothèque Mazarine*);
- *Legal labels*, used in judicial and notarial offices to identify bundles and dossiers;
- *Fiduciary currency*, as *billets de confiance* during the monetary crisis of 1791–1792;
- *Ration and military tokens*, recording food distribution or supplies;
- *Visiting and advertising cards*, printed with commercial or personal details;
- *Pedagogical aids*, for grammar and orthography instruction;
- *Parlour games and private messages*, bearing riddles, verses, or moral aphorisms;
- *Artistic supports*, used for ink or graphite sketches with pastoral or domestic subjects.



Poudre vermifuge
 1/2 lb. pain de sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy

Pâte pour les rats et souris :
 1/2 lb. pain de sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy

2338 Maimbourg
 Histoire de la Ligue
 par Maimbourg
 Paris. Cramoisy.
 1683. in 4°
 N. D.

Library Card:
 MAIMBOURG, *Histoire de la Ligue*,
 par Maimbourg Paris, Cramoisy,
 1683, in 4°

Eau de la Reine d'Hongrie
 1/2 lb. pain de sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy

Cire liquide pour les bottes
 1/2 lb. pain de sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy
 1/2 lb. sucre 1/2 lb. cy

These cards were once owned by a physician ("pharmacien").
 Their versos are inscribed with handwritten recipes for several products he offered for sale, including:
Eau de la Reine de Hongrie, *Pâte pour les rats et souris*, *Poudre vermifuge*, *Cire liquide pour bottes*

This corpus constitutes an invaluable primary source for research into the material and documentary culture of the French *Ancien Régime*. The richness and variety of reuses provide a window onto practices of recycling that illuminate the social, economic, and administrative dynamics of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France. From a socio-historical perspective, these fragments reveal strategies of resource management within an economy of scarcity, where paper became a medium of administrative, pedagogical, fiscal, and emotional memory.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: C. P. HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983.

[Voltaire Foundation, Recto and verso: playing cards in France before 1789.](#)

[French Playing Cards, Backs.](#)



FEUILLADE,
 Horloger de Paris, fait, vend & arrange
 les Montres à répétition, à cylindre, & les
 Pendules : il fait aussi des Réveils mécaniques,
 qui, au même instant, ouvrent les rideaux du
 lit, ceux des fenêtres, les fenêtres même,
 allument le feu & la bougie.
 Il demeure à Riom, au coin de la rue de
 l'Intendance.
Jeune est





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1765

HENRY HART EXPORTATION PACK FOR THE AMERICAN COLONIES:
AMONG THE EARLIEST DECKS TO CIRCULATE IN AMERICA
TAX STAMP TYPE A8: «AN ACE WITH NO TAX!»

32. [PLAYING CARDS]. *English playing card deck Exportation Pack Type A8*. London: Henry Hart, ca. 1765.

52/52 cards [93 x 65 mm], woodblock-printed and hand-coloured by stencil in vermilion red and deep black. Court figures are single half-length portraits in the pre-Jones London tradition, with value indicators in the upper corners. The iconography follows the so-called “Old Frizzle” pattern, still current before the 1801 reform, while the numeral suits preserve the symmetrical layout of mirrored pips. Versos blank. The deck retains the original English fiscal stamp on the Ace of Spades, in accordance with the Stamp Duty introduced in 1711. Hand-coloured, complete, in perfect condition.

€ 4.800

This deck belongs to the series of export packs classified as *A8*, introduced in 1765, the first year the Stamp Act was applied to English playing cards. The *Ace of Spades* is Type A8 (1765–1828), characterized by an oval seal with the royal cypher “*G.III REX*” surmounted by a crown, the motto of the Order of the Garter “*Honi soit qui mal y pense*”, and the legend “*Exportation*”, marking stock intended for the overseas colonies and exempt from domestic duty, together with the maker’s name, Henry Hart, one of only five London cardmakers authorized by the Stamp Office to obtain duty-free ace sheets.

Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense, translating to “Shamed be he who thinks evil of it”, is an old French phrase, motto of the Order of the Garter, the most prestigious order of chivalry in the United Kingdom, established by King Edward III in 1348. The inclusion of this motto on the Ace of Spades was customary during this period, symbolizing authenticity and the deck’s compliance with tax regulations.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: J. BERRY, *Taxation on Playing-cards in England from 1711 to 1960*, IPCS, 2001; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, 1983, pp. 90-96; C. P. HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 169-186; The World of Playing Cards website. The International Playing-Card Society, Pattern Sheet 48.



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1775

JOSEPH HENSELER AND THE EMERGENCE
OF METAL MATRICES IN PLAYING-CARD PRODUCTION:
A VERY RARE BRASS PRINTING BLOCK FROM CENTRAL EUROPE

33. [PRINTING BLOCK]. HENSELER, JOSEPH. *Brass printing block for Paris Pattern court cards*. Rauns Waltenhofen, Allgäu (Bavaria): ca. 1775.

Rectangular composite printing block (270 × 240 mm), comprising twelve engraved metal matrices (each 60 × 50 mm) arranged in a regular grid of three rows and four columns, mounted on a later wooden support. Executed in a copper alloy, most plausibly brass, engraved with a burin producing clean, deeply incised V-shaped lines. Figures in relief within rectangular frames, showing wear from repeated use, with residues in recessed lines and localized oxidation. The twelve matrices represent the full court series (Kings, Queens, Jacks). Inscriptions “HENS / ELER” and “JOSEPH” identify the maker. Absence of engraved suit symbols indicates later stencil colouring.

€ 8,000

This printing block preserves the complete engraved matrices for a full series of court cards produced in southern Germany in the late eighteenth century and attributable to Joseph Henseler. As a surviving working tool rather than a printed deck, it constitutes a rare and materially direct witness to production practice, allowing the reconstruction of both technical procedures and workshop organization. Objects of this type were typically worn out, dismantled, or melted down, making the survival of a coherent and complete matrix particularly significant.

The object illustrates a decisive technological transition from woodcut to metal engraving, a shift that transformed the economics and aesthetics of playing-card production. Metal matrices enabled sharper definition, finer modulation of line, and greater durability over extended print runs, ensuring a higher degree of visual consistency. Within this framework, the present block reflects not only technical refinement but also the increasing standardization of imagery, responding to a growing and geographically expanding market.

At the same time, the engraved surface retains clear evidence of manual execution, preserving the tactile presence of the burin and the subtle irregularities of handwork. This coexistence of artisanal gesture and proto-industrial reproducibility situates the object at a critical threshold in the history of print culture.



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and HD images](#)

The matrices were designed for typographic printing, with ink applied to the raised surfaces and transferred to paper under pressure, producing sheets bearing the linear structure of the figures. These impressions were subsequently coloured by hand, most often through stencil masks applied in successive stages. The deliberate absence of engraved suit symbols reflects a conscious separation between the graphic skeleton of the image and its chromatic completion, a practice that allowed flexibility in production, adaptation to different regional markets, and efficient reuse of the same matrices across multiple series.

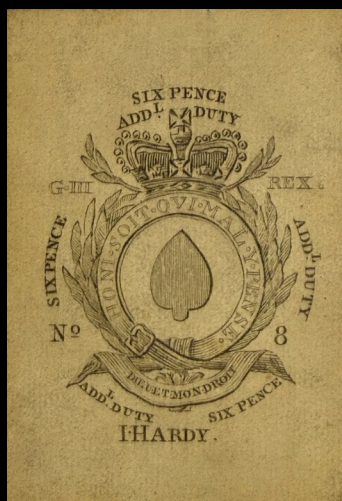
The iconographic programme adheres closely to the Paris pattern, one of the most widely disseminated and enduring visual systems in European playing cards. Here, however, it is interpreted through a Central European engraving idiom that introduces subtle but perceptible variations in physiognomy, posture, and ornamental vocabulary. The richly dressed figures, with their elaborate costumes, heraldic motifs, and symbolic attributes, reveal both adherence to a codified visual language and the persistence of local stylistic identity. The integration of the maker's name within the decorative scheme corresponds to established workshop practices, functioning simultaneously as signature and as element of the visual composition.

The geographical context is equally significant. The Allgäu region, positioned at the intersection of Bavaria, Tyrol, and Switzerland, played a strategic role in the circulation of goods, models, and technical knowledge. Within this network, the adoption of French-suited iconography by a Bavarian maker reflects the permeability of cultural and commercial boundaries. The object thus embodies a hybrid visual culture, in which standardized European models were continuously reinterpreted within regional workshops.

As a surviving production matrix rather than a finished product, the block provides exceptional insight into the material and conceptual foundations of playing-card manufacture. It stands not merely as a tool, but as a document of transmission, adaptation, and technical evolution within late eighteenth-century European visual culture.

CONDITIONS: The matrices are well preserved and structurally sound, retaining a high degree of clarity in the engraved lines. The surfaces show consistent wear compatible with repeated use, including slight flattening of the relief and localized oxidation within recessed areas. The wooden mount is later and non-original, serving as a stabilizing support.

REFERENCES: M. HAUSLER, *Das Bayerische Bild. Studien zur Spielkarte*, no. 4, 1993; H. RADAU and K. MATTHES, *Deutsche Spielkarten 1650–1900*, 2001; International Playing-Card Society Pattern Sheets, Paris pattern; Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich, *Spielkartenmodel* collections.



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1801
FROM AXE TO SWORD
ENGLISH COURT FIGURES AND THE «SUICIDE KING»

THE A4 TYPE ACE OF SPADES

34. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Standard English Playing Cards*. London: I. Hardy, ca. 1801.

52/52 playing cards (95 × 65 mm), printed from woodblocks and stenciled in red, blue, yellow, and black; standard English pattern; square corners; printed on stout card stock with a green dotted decorative back pattern. Court cards with traditional full-length figures of the *English Standard* type (IPCS Pattern Sheet 48). Ace of Spades type A4, *GIII REX*, *Additional Six Pence* three times, inscribed *I. HARDY* as required by statute.

€ 1.600

This deck represents the transitional phase of British card taxation, when multiple additional duties were indicated directly on the Ace of Spades. It is a fine example of the standardized English pattern that became canonical by the early nineteenth century, retaining square corners and traditional stencil colouring. The deck comprises four suits, Spades, Hearts, Clubs, and Diamonds, each including the English trio of Jack, Queen, and King, rendered in the characteristic stylised manner codified before 1840.

The official duty card, elaborately engraved with royal arms, crown, the garter motto *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, and the inscription *Six Pence Addl Duty* repeated three times, bears the name *I. Hardy* as printer. Hardy's Ace belongs to the first series produced after the Union of Great Britain and Ireland (1801), which explains the presence of the post-Union royal arms.

A distinctive feature of the English Standard court figures is the King of Hearts, often referred to as the *Suicide King*. The king appears to thrust a sword through his own head. This iconographic oddity originated from French prototypes, where the monarch brandished a weapon behind his head. Through centuries of copying and stylization, the gesture gradually shifted, and by the early nineteenth century it resembled an act of self-wounding, an unintended but enduring hallmark of the English pattern.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: J. BERRY, *Taxation on Playing-Cards in England from 1711 to 1960*, IPCS, 2001, p. 64; S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Verlag, 1990, p. 128; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 90-92; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 65-66; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing Cards*, Dover publications, 2021, p. 186.

1815

« LA GARDE MEURT ET NE SE REND PAS »

A COMPLETE PIQUET DECK TO MARK NAPOLEON'S RETURN FROM EXILE ON ELBA

35. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Jeu des Drapeaux*, Paris: ca. 1815.

32/32 engraved cards (102 × 64 mm), French suited, mounted on thick paperboard with plain white versos. The cards belong to the French piquet pattern, conforming to the usual thirty-two-card structure (ace, six through king). Each card is printed from copperplate and subsequently hand-coloured, with the suit signs incorporated into flags borne by soldiers.

€ 3.400

A rare commemorative deck issued in Paris during the first Restoration to celebrate Napoleon's return from Elba. One of the most famous patriotic decks of the early nineteenth century, merging military imagery with the traditional piquet structure.

Each suit depicts the armies of four nations: French (Hearts), Russian (Clubs), German (Diamonds), and British (Spades). Court cards show generals, allegories, and flag bearers, while pip cards feature marching troops, drummers, and artillery with flags bearing suit symbols. The King of Hearts proclaims the general Cambronne's legendary motto *La garde meurt et ne se rend pas*. The choice of the refined piquet format suggests an intended audience among the educated elite, blending political propaganda with recreational play.

Produced during the Hundred Days in 1815, the deck reflects the fervent patriotic spirit surrounding Napoleon's brief restoration, echoing the use of popular prints and playing cards as tools of political imagery.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use, but in general a very good deck.

REFERENCES: H. R. D'ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIV au XX siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906; H. R. D'ALLEMAGNE, *Antique Playing cards design*, Dover publications, 2005; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, p. 75; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 74; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966; Victoria & Albert Museum, E.408-2005; Cary collection, Fra, nos. 322, 323.



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1817-1818

TRANSFORMATION DECK FROM A VIENNESE TALE

FIRST EDITION, FIRST ISSUE, UNCUT

36. [TRANSFORMATION CARDS]. *Beatrice, or the Fracas*, London: Rudolph Ackermann, 1817-1818.

Complete uncut pack of 52/52 playing cards (90 × 70 mm), on 13 stipple-engraved plates on thin card as issued (200 × 140 mm), each depicting four playing cards with French suits. Full-length court cards with contemporary hand-colouring, red suits with stenciled suit signs, pip cards transformed. Plates preserved together in the original portfolio with stiff front and back covers (worn), front cover bearing one of the plates reproduced as a paper label (faded). *Pictorial Cards* title at head and imprint at foot dated *Jan'y 1 1819*, printed price at lower right overwritten in early ink manuscript *10/6*, faint ink signature at centre of the front cover.

€ 4.200

The original drawings for the cards of the *Beatrice, or the Fracas* deck were made by H. F. Müller, a Viennese artist, with an exotic design depicting classical Romans, Greeks, and Turks.

The cards appeared in a monthly magazine called *Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions and Politics*, four cards to a tipped-in plate with the number and date of issue at the bottom of the plate. In the upper right corner above the cards are the plate and volume numbers. The watermark on the paper is dated 1818 (Field).

The present deck belongs to the rare first issue, published before the official monthly publication in the *Repository*. The cards were, in fact, published on brown cardboard watermarked 1817, in a portfolio with stiff front and back covers and no binding. Since these plates do not have the numbers in the upper right corners, they must have been printed before the plates were used for the magazine, as numbers could not be removed from an engraved plate but could easily be added later. The date of the watermark confirms this deduction (Field).

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use on few cards; overall, in exceptional condition.

PROVENANCE: Dudley Ollis' collection.

REFERENCES: A. FIELD, *Transformation Playing Cards*, U.S. Games Systems, 1987, no. 22: "One of the most artistic and imaginative transformation packs"; Ortiz-Patino collection, no.72; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, p. 146; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 38; M. WYNNE, *The Art of the Playing Card*, The Yale University Library Gazette 47, 1973, nos. 137, 184; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966; S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Verlag, 1990; Schreiber, *German*, nos. 249, 332, 339.



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1828

A GEORGIAN-VICTORIAN TRANSITIONAL DECK
WITH THE OFFICIAL FISCAL «THE OLD FRIZZLE» ACE OF SPADES

37. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Standard English Playing Cards*. London: Hunt & Sons, ca. 1828.

52/52 playing cards [95 × 65 mm], woodblocks with hand-stenciled colouring in red, blue, yellow, and black. Ace of Spades engraved with the fiscal emblem *Duty One Shilling*, classified as Berry type A7 *Old Frizzle*. Standard English single-ended court figures, square corners, unturned, printed on stout card; plain light-blue backs. Pattern corresponds to the traditional *English Standard* as codified before 1840 (IPCS *Pattern Sheet 48*).

€ 1.000

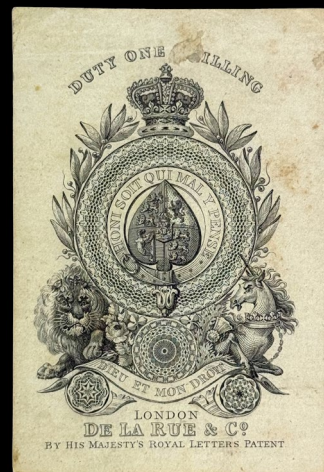
A fine example of an early nineteenth-century English deck issued soon after the 1828 reform that introduced the official engraved duty ace. The pack preserves the traditional single-ended courts of the Georgian style, coloured by stencil, while anticipating the industrialization of the Victorian period. Four suits of thirteen: Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, and Spades. Courts bold and richly coloured, unturned. The *Ace of Spades* is the official *Old Frizzle* supplied by the Stamp Office, marking payment of the one-shilling tax. The *King of Hearts* is notable as the so-called *Suicide King*, appearing to plunge a sword into his head, a motif derived from seventeenth-century French models gradually miscopied by English engravers until it became a fixed and dramatic convention.

The deck reflects the fiscal and cultural reforms of 1828, when the government imposed a uniform engraved Ace of Spades to prevent forgery and ensure tax control. Hunt & Sons, active in London from ca.1820 to 1849, were leading manufacturers, introducing stereotype printing and standardized court imagery. Their work bridges the late Georgian handcrafted tradition and the modern industrial production later dominated by De La Rue. Packs of this type circulated widely in Britain and its colonies, spreading both entertainment and state symbolism.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: *Duty One Shilling*, A7 “Old Frizzle” tax stamp on Ace of Spades.

REFERENCES: J. BERRY, *Taxation on Playing-Cards in England from 1711 to 1960*, IPCS, 2001, no. 3; S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Verlag, 1990, p. 128; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 90-92; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 65-66; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing Cards*, Dover publications, 2021, p. 186. BRITISH MUSEUM, *Catalogue of Playing Cards*. London: nos. 1904,0511.24.1-52 (Hunt & Sons, c.1828).



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1832-1835

EARLY DE LA RUE "OLD FRIZZLE" DECK WITH ORIGINAL CASE

38. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Standard English Playing Cards, "Old Frizzle"*. London: De La Rue & Co., by His Majesty's Royal Letters Patent, circa 1832-1835

52/52 playing cards (95 × 65 mm), woodblock printed and hand-coloured with stencil in red, blue, yellow, and black. Single-ended English courts; Ace of Spades with "Duty One Shilling" fiscal emblem and De La Rue inscription. Stout card, square corners, geometric orange and yellow patterned backs. Original brown paper-covered sliding case preserved. No indices, no die numbers (IPCS #48).

€ 700

A complete and early example of De La Rue production at the moment when fiscal regulation reshaped English playing cards. The pack belongs to the first phase of the "Old Frizzle" duty ace (Berry A7), immediately following its registration in 1832, and preserves defining pre-modern features, including single-ended courts, absence of indices, and hand-applied stencil colouring. The survival of the original case, together with the early geometric back, distinguishes the present example within the small corpus of first-generation regulated packs. The iconography adheres to the established English pattern derived from French prototypes, transmitted through repeated copying and gradual standardisation. The courts, printed in bold woodcut and heightened with primary colours, retain a schematic clarity that reflects both functional design and inherited visual conventions. The King of Hearts, with the sword appearing to pierce his head, exemplifies the so-called "Suicide King", a motif resulting from progressive simplification rather than intentional symbolism. The Ace of Spades forms the regulatory and visual centre of the deck. Its engraved royal arms, encircled by *Honi soit qui mal y pense* and surmounted by *Dieu et mon droit*, are enclosed within the textured "Old Frizzle" device. Classified by J. Berry as Type A7, this variant bearing the De La Rue inscription corresponds to the plate registered in 1832. The absence of die numbers, combined with the early stencil colouring and the simplicity of the back design, situates the pack within the earliest phase of production under the new fiscal system.

CONDITIONS: Light to moderate wear consistent with use. Minor soiling and occasional staining, particularly visible on the Ace of Spades. The original case shows abrasions, edge losses, and partial splitting at the joints, but remains structurally intact.

PROVENANCE: Ace of Spades with "Duty One Shilling" fiscal stamp (Berry type A7, "Old Frizzle").

REFERENCES: J. BERRY, *Taxation on Playing-Cards in England from 1711 to 1960*, IPCS, 2001, no. 3; S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Verlag, 1990, p. 128; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, pp. 90-92.



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1840
THE «ENGLISH TRADITIONAL PATTERN»

39. [PLAYING CARDS]. *English Deck*. London: Reynolds & Sons, ca. 1840.

52/52 cards (95 x 65 mm), woodblock stencil-coloured, comprising four suits of thirteen. *Duty One Shilling, Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense, Reynolds & Sons* displayed on the Ace of Spades. Single-ended design, square corners, green back with geometrical decoration in darker green.

€ 800

This deck is a perfectly preserved example of mid-nineteenth-century British playing cards in the *English Traditional Pattern*, produced by the esteemed printing house Reynolds & Sons. The pattern faithfully reproduces the intricate designs of earlier cards made before the simplified versions of the twentieth century. Each card reflects the rich heritage and artistry of sixteenth- to eighteenth-century playing-card traditions, capturing historical nuances and emblematic figures.

Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense, translating to *Shame on him who thinks evil of it*, is an old French phrase and the motto of the Order of the Garter, the most prestigious order of chivalry in the United Kingdom, established by King Edward III in 1348. The inclusion of this motto on the *Ace of Spades* was customary during this period, symbolizing authenticity and compliance with tax regulations.

Duty One Shilling: between 1711 and 1960, playing cards in Britain were subject to a government-imposed tax, a significant source of revenue for the Treasury. In 1840 the duty was increased to one shilling per deck, a rate that remained until 1862. This tax was evidenced by a duty stamp on the Ace of Spades, known as the duty ace. The presence of the *Duty One Shilling* stamp on this deck's Ace of Spades helps to date its production to between 1840 and 1862.

However, in 1840 Reynolds introduced a modification to the traditional English pattern, modernizing the court-card designs with an overlay of decorative engraved motifs. This trend was subsequently imitated by foreign manufacturers, such as Boisse. Reynolds also produced a double-ended version of their new designs, as double-ended playing cards were becoming increasingly accepted during that period.

CONDITIONS: Few marks of use; overall, a fine copy.

REFERENCES: S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Verlag, 1990, p. 128; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 90-92; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 65-66; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing Cards*, Dover publications, 2021, p. 186. BNF 12148/btv1b105326144. The International Playing-Card Society website.

1850

CONCEALED DESIRES REVEALED BY CANDLELIGHT:
EROTICISM HIDDEN IN A PLAY OF TRANSPARENCIES

RARE FRENCH TRANSLUCENT EROTIC DECK OF CARDS

40. [EROTIC PLAYING CARDS]. *The Forbidden Translucent Deck*. S.l. [but France, plausibly Paris]: s.n., s.d. [but ca. 1850].

52/52 cards (90 × 58 mm), engraved and hand-coloured; French-suited pack (Spades, Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds), with round corners. The surface design conforms to the conventional structure of a nineteenth-century French pack, with pips on the numeral cards and costumed court figures of historicising character. The distinctive technical feature consists in the presence, on each card, of a concealed image that becomes legible when the card is held against a strong light source, thereby revealing an erotic scene integrated into, and visually activated by, the ostensibly conventional composition.

€ 4.200

A rare French translucent erotic pack: under ordinary light it appears conventional, while transmitted light reveals concealed erotic scenes within the card stock. The deck belongs to the small nineteenth-century corpus of optical novelty cards that combine gaming, print ingenuity, and private erotic amusement.

Its interest is therefore double: technical, because the imagery depends on controlled translucency; and cultural, because it documents a discreet market for erotic printed objects in mid-nineteenth-century France.

In the present example the erotic imagery constitutes not a secondary embellishment but the conceptual foundation of the entire pack. The suit cards function as compositional frameworks in which the pip arrangements subtly organise the hidden scenes. When illuminated from behind, the colours intensify and disclose a sequence of erotic vignettes concealed beneath the apparently innocent design. The court cards display an even more elaborate conception. Their gestures, posture, and distribution of empty space have been calculated so that, under backlighting, the figures interact directly with the concealed imagery. Kings, queens, and knaves appear to participate in or become implicated within the revealed scenes, producing a striking transformation between the decorous surface and the explicit image disclosed by light. The deck therefore demonstrates a refined synthesis of graphic planning, colour application, and technical control over the translucency of the paper support.



[Click to see the erotic image](#)

(Disclaimer: Some of the following images depict erotic scenes, presented with artistic intent. They may offend the sensibilities of some viewers and should only be viewed by informed and consenting adults)

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(Disclaimer: Some of the following images depict erotic scenes, presented with artistic intent. They may offend the sensibilities of some viewers and should only be viewed by informed and consenting adults)

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Translucent erotic decks occupy a distinctive position within the wider nineteenth-century tradition of transformation imagery. Whereas most transformation packs rely on graphic wit or the playful reinterpretation of suit signs, these examples achieve their effect through the physical properties of their construction. By exploiting layered paper and controlled translucency, the designer created an image that exists in latent form until activated by transmitted light. The viewer's act of holding the card before a candle or lamp becomes an essential part of the visual experience, transforming the deck from a simple gaming implement into a small instrument of optical performance.

This mechanism situates such objects within the broader culture of nineteenth-century visual experimentation, a milieu fascinated by illusions, optical devices, and image transformations that anticipated later pre-cinematographic entertainments. At the same time, translucent erotic packs are recognisably French in character and are closely associated with the discreet Parisian environment in which refined erotic novelties were conceived and privately circulated. Their distribution was likely limited to specialised urban contexts connected with the commerce of sophisticated erotic objects, notably districts such as Montmartre.

The disparity between their probable original diffusion and the relatively small number of surviving examples is therefore unsurprising. The intimate mode of use, the necessity of exposing the cards to candlelight in order to activate the hidden scenes, and the moral vulnerability of erotic material frequently led to damage, destruction, or deliberate suppression. Complete surviving packs are consequently rare. The present example thus possesses a dual significance for collectors: it represents both a technically accomplished artefact of mid-nineteenth-century popular print culture and a rare material witness to the discreet and ephemeral urban market for erotic imagery in France during the period of the July Monarchy and the early Second Empire.

CONDITIONS: Some marks of use on a few cards; overall, well preserved.

REFERENCES: T. DENNING, *Translucent Playing-cards*, Birmingham: Denning, 1976; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 66-67; D. HOFFMANN and M. DIETRICH, *Pikante Blätter*, Dortmund: Harenberg, 1982; K. F. JENSEN, *Eroticism on Playing Cards, 1940-1990*, Roskilde: Ouroboros, 1990.

S. WINTLE, *Translucent Playing Cards, The World of Playing Cards: [Translucent Playing Cards — The World of Playing Cards](#)*.



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1850

A FINE «DE-LUXE» EDITION OF A RARE FRENCH «COSTUMES DECK»

41. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Les Modes*, Paris: Cartes parisiennes, [ca. 1850].

52/52 engraved playing cards (87 x 56 mm), with pale pink glossy paper versos. Preserved in the **original slipcase**, decorated on the lid with a green-printed vignette bearing the emblem of the “Cartes Parisiennes.” Gilt edges. Accompanied by the original descriptive slip indicating the edition type.

€ 1.600

A COMPLETE DELUXE VERSION of the elegant *Jeu de 52 cartes – Les Modes*, published in Paris around 1850, belonging to the *Costume Playing Cards* type typical of mid-nineteenth-century France. *Cartes à Costumes* (“Costume cards”) were a popular variant of standard playing cards produced in France particularly between the 1830s and 1870s. These decks combined the traditional 52-card structure with the artistic and cultural fascination for contemporary fashion, social typologies, and romanticized depictions of daily life. Clubs (Trèfles): hunting scenes, with figures engaged in outdoor pursuits evoking aristocratic leisure and rural tradition.

Diamonds (Carreaux): portrayals of travel and tourism, featuring well-dressed figures visiting notable monuments, suggestive of the *Grand Tour* or bourgeois sightseeing in major European capitals. Hearts (Cœurs): domestic interiors, depicting the protagonists in refined residences surrounded by landscaped parks, emblematic of comfort, taste, and affluence.

Spades (Piques): maritime settings, likely representing a patrician family at the seaside, with the elder patriarch possibly alluding to a shipowner or merchant.

Produced in Paris during the Second Republic (1848–1852), this deck reflects the growing influence of fashion illustration, romantic aesthetics, and bourgeois values in visual culture. The mid-century vogue for collecting and displaying playing cards coincided with the flowering of lithography and engraved ephemera, particularly among the emerging middle classes. The publisher *Cartes Parisiennes*, active between the 1840s and 1860s, was renowned for its high-quality production aimed at both entertainment and aesthetic appreciation.

CONDITIONS: One edge of the slipcase partially split; otherwise perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: From the Kilian Fritsch collection. Kilian Fritsch was a refined French bibliophile renowned for his passion for the arts of living, particularly fashion, costume, and gastronomy. His “Costume and Fashion” collection is considered one of the most important private holdings in this field, comprising approximately one thousand works, including books, magazines, and rare periodicals.

REFERENCES: [World of Playing Cards website](#).



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and High Res images

1850

A FINE FRENCH «COSTUMES DECK»

42. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Les Modes*, Paris: Cartes parisiennes, [ca. 1850].

52/52 engraved playing cards (85 x 54 mm), pink glossy paper backs. Preserved in the original green paper-covered slipcase. The King is not distinguished by a crown.

€ 1.100

Comprising the standard suits of Spades, Diamonds, Hearts, and Clubs, the deck includes the traditional court cards, Knave, Queen, and King, reinterpreted through finely engraved portraiture depicting fashionable ladies and gentlemen in mid-nineteenth-century attire. The King is visually distinguished by age and a prominent beard, enhancing the iconographic hierarchy of the figures.

Produced in Paris during the Second Republic (1848–1852), this deck reflects the growing influence of fashion illustration, romantic aesthetics, and bourgeois values in visual culture. The mid-century vogue for collecting and displaying playing cards coincided with the flowering of lithography and engraved ephemera, particularly among the emerging middle classes. The publisher *Cartes Parisiennes*, active during the 1840s–1860s, was renowned for high-quality production aimed at both entertainment and aesthetic appreciation.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: From the Kilian Fritsch collection. Kilian Fritsch was a refined French bibliophile renowned for his passion for the arts of living, particularly fashion, costume, and gastronomy. His “Costume and Fashion” collection is considered one of the most important private holdings in this field, comprising approximately one thousand works, including books, magazines, and rare periodicals.

REFERENCES: [World of Playing Cards website](https://www.worldofplayingcards.com/).



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1850
A FINE FRENCH «COSTUMES DECK»

43. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Les Modes*, Paris: Cartes parisiennes, [ca. 1850].

52/52 engraved playing cards (87 x 56 mm), with sky-blue glazed paper backs. Preserved in the original slipcase covered in cream satin paper with floral motif. The king is distinguished by a crown above the suit sign.

€ 1.100

Comprising the standard suits of spades, diamonds, hearts, and clubs, the deck includes the traditional court cards, knave, queen, and king, reinterpreted through finely engraved portraiture depicting fashionable ladies and gentlemen in mid-19th-century attire.

Produced in Paris during the Second Republic (1848–1852), this deck reflects the growing influence of fashion illustration, romantic aesthetics, and bourgeois values in visual culture. The mid-century vogue for collecting and displaying playing cards coincided with the flowering of lithography and engraved ephemera, especially among the emerging middle classes. The “Cartes parisiennes” publisher, active during the 1840s–1860s, was renowned for high-quality production aimed at both entertainment and aesthetic appreciation.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: From the Kilian Fritsch collection. Kilian Fritsch was a refined French bibliophile renowned for his passion for the arts of living, particularly fashion, costume, and gastronomy. His collection dedicated to “costume and fashion” is considered one of the most important private holdings in this field, comprising approximately one thousand works, including books, magazines, and rare periodicals.

REFERENCES: [World of Playing Cards website](#).



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1860

“HOLD TO THE LIGHT”: A COMPLETE AMERICAN TRANSLUCENT PACK,
REVEALING HIDDEN COMIC VIGNETTES AND ENGLISH PROVERBS

44. [SATIRICAL PLAYING CARDS]. *Translucent Playing Cards*. New York: ca. 1860.

52/52 cards (83 × 51 mm), printed in colour (red and blue) on translucent paper pasteboard engineered to permit transmission of light, gilt edges. French suits (hearts, diamonds, clubs, spades), without indices. Courts full-length and single-ended. Backs plain white. The Ace of Spades bears an ornamental typographic composition consisting of a decorative central spade device framed by a symmetrical arabesque cartouche printed in blue line within a rectangular border. Suits rendered in highly stylised ornamental form: clubs and spades in blue, hearts and diamonds in red, all designed with a distinctive fleur-de-lis-derived graphic structure. Courts printed in two colours, showing standing figures in contemporary romanticised costume. Original box present.

The deck possesses the distinctive structural feature of translucent construction: when held to a strong light the transparent cards reveal concealed comic illustrations accompanied by captions or wordplay. Several of these captions may contain offensive imagery or language reflective of the attitudes of their time.

€ 4.000

This rare American pack belongs to the small and technically remarkable class of nineteenth-century translucent playing cards, conceived as hybrid objects combining the practical function of a gaming deck with the optical surprise of hidden imagery revealed through transmitted light. Under normal viewing conditions the cards appear entirely conventional, but when placed against a strong light source each card reveals a concealed vignette accompanied by a short English caption or proverb. The linguistic and proverbial character of these texts situates the deck firmly within an Anglophone cultural context and accords with the attribution to New York recorded in the Hochman classification.

Such translucent packs occupy a distinctive niche within the history of playing-card manufacture. Their fascination lies not only in novelty but in the technical ingenuity required to embed a second pictorial layer within the structure of the card while preserving its ordinary appearance during play. Surviving complete examples are uncommon, owing both to the fragility of the materials and to the repeated handling encouraged by their curiosity value.



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The deck follows the standard structure of the fifty-two card pack in French suits, yet its design shows a distinctive decorative coherence. The pip cards employ stylised suit symbols derived from the fleur-de-lis motif, lending the pack a refined ornamental character. The black suits are printed in blue rather than black, while the red suits appear in a warm red tone, producing the typical bicolor palette associated with mid-nineteenth-century printing economies. The courts appear as single full-length figures rendered in romanticised historical costume, aligned with the continental iconographic tradition rather than the later Anglo-American double-ended format. Jacks carry halberds or staffs, Kings display regal insignia, and Queens appear in elaborately stylised dress.

The Ace of Spades serves as the principal decorative card of the pack. Instead of bearing a maker's imprint it presents a symmetrical typographic ornament centred on a large spade device enclosed within an arabesque cartouche, a form typical of decorative mid-nineteenth-century card design.

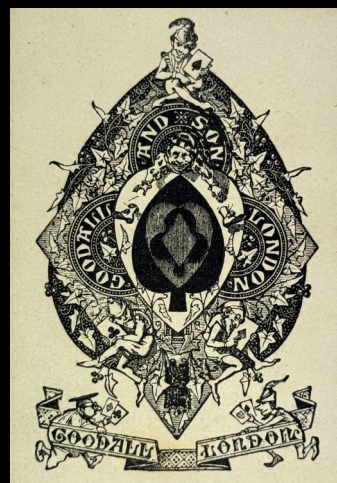
The most remarkable feature lies in the concealed pictorial layer embedded within each card. When held before a strong light source the transmitted illumination reveals finely printed interior scenes accompanied by short captions or proverbial sayings. The images appear reversed or partially mirrored depending on the orientation of the card, indicating that the illustrations were specifically designed to be viewed through the translucent paper.

The hidden vignettes illustrate familiar English aphorisms and moral observations, transforming the deck into a miniature anthology of visualised proverbs. Scenes corresponding to sayings such as "Forbidden fruit is always the best" or "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" combine humorous narrative imagery with moral commentary, a formula widely encountered in nineteenth-century popular print culture.

Transparent playing cards such as this belong to the broader nineteenth-century culture of optical amusements. During this period a widespread fascination developed for images that changed or revealed themselves under particular lighting conditions, including transparency prints, dissolving views and shadow pictures. Within this context the present deck represents an ingenious application of optical surprise to the familiar structure of the playing card pack, placing it at the intersection of gaming, popular printing and early forms of interactive visual entertainment.

CONDITIONS: A few cards with spotting or damp-soiling at the corners; otherwise in very good condition.

REFERENCES: T. DAWSON and J. DAWSON, *The Hochman Encyclopedia of American Playing Cards*, Stamford: U.S. Games Systems, 2000, no. O20c; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming*, New York: Dover, 1966; T. DENNING, *Translucent Playing-cards*, Birmingham: Denning, 1976; W. GURNEY BENHAM, *Playing Cards: History of the Pack and Explanations of Its Many Secrets*, London: Spring Books, 1931.



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1867-1875

FROM «DUTY» TO «TRADEMARK»: A GOODALL PACK WITH BRANDED ACE OF SPADES,
PRE-INDEX, FEATURING THE «SUICIDE KING» AND AN ORNAMENTAL BACK

45. [PLAYING CARDS]. *IPCS Pattern Sheet 48, Goodall type G4*. London: Charles Goodall & Son, ca. 1867–1875.

Complete pack of 52 playing cards, dimensions [92 × 65 mm], chromolithographed in the traditional English pattern. Court cards are double-headed in vivid red, yellow, blue, and black. The *Ace of Spades* is elaborately decorated with allegorical figures and scrollwork, inscribed *GOODALL & SON, LONDON*, height 85 mm, serving as the printer's device. No fiscal stamp present, consistent with post-1862 production. The reverse is printed in monochrome green with a floral bouquet design, typical of Goodall's early ornamental backs. Square corners, no indices at card corners.

€ 1.000

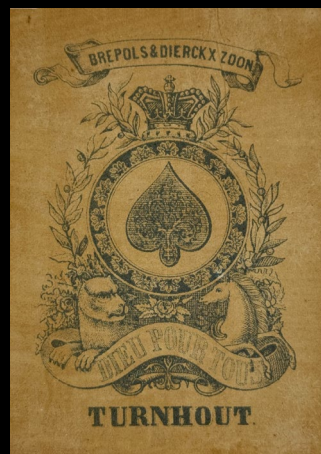
This rare Victorian pack is a striking example of the transition in English cardmaking following the reduction of duty in 1862. Freed from state control, the *Ace of Spades* became a vehicle for corporate identity and branding, here executed with exceptional decorative richness. The ornamental back reflects Goodall's early leadership in transforming plain reverses into surfaces for visual design. The *Suicide King* of Hearts, sword raised behind his head, preserves a long iconographic tradition inherited from French prototypes.

Dating can be limited to 1867–1875: the measured height of the *Ace*, together with its elaborate engraving, situates the deck after the fiscal abolition yet before the introduction of indices (1874).

CHARLES GOODALL & SON, founded in 1820, rapidly achieved prominence through technical innovation and marketing acumen. After the fire of 1845, the firm rebuilt with modern presses, brighter pigments, and a pioneering programme of decorative backs. By the 1860s and 1870s Goodall was exporting widely, producing millions of packs, and competing with De La Rue at the forefront of the industry. Among their innovations were the first indexed *Duplex* cards (1874) and even the earliest commercial Christmas card (1862). Such achievements position this pack within a decisive moment in Victorian design history, when playing cards evolved from taxable commodities into branded objects of style and commerce.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Verlag, 1990, p. 128; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 90-92; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 65-66; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing Cards*, Dover publications, 2021, p. 186; J. BERRY, *Taxation on Playing-Cards in England from 1711 to 1960*, IPCS, 2001, no. 3. *The International Playing-Card Society website*.



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1870

BETWEEN TRADITION AND INNOVATION:
BREPOLS' SINGLE-HEADED ENGLISH PATTERN FROM TURNHOUT

46. [PLAYING CARDS]. *English Pattern, Belgian variant*. Turnhout: Brepols & Dierckx Zoon, ca. 1870.

52/52 cards (95 × 75 mm), printed from lithographic plates and stenciled in red, yellow, blue, and black. Single-headed figures (full-length), without indices, consistent with mid-nineteenth-century practice. Backs decorated with a dotted pink geometric design. The Ace of Spades features a large ornamental composition with crown, heraldic beasts, and the motto *Dieu Pour Tous*, together with the imprint *Brepols & Dierckx Zoon – Turnhout*. No tax stamp or fiscal mark present. The dating of the deck is supported by the imprint in use from 1858 to 1911 and by stylistic comparison with other Turnhout productions of circa 1860–1870.

€ 1.100

This deck exemplifies the Belgian adaptation of the English pattern during the later nineteenth century. While it preserves the general structure of the English court figures, it departs from strict conformity in facial features, costume, and outlines, creating imagery that remains recognizably British yet distinctively continental. Its single-headed format, vivid stencil colouring, and decorative Ace of Spades demonstrate both continuity with earlier English practice and the distinctive imprint of Turnhout craftsmanship.

BREPOLS & DIERCKX ZOON originated with Pieter Jozef Brepols (1778–1845), who established a printing workshop in Turnhout at the beginning of the nineteenth century and produced the town's first deck in 1826, laying the foundation for its later epithet as the *capital of playing cards*. In 1833 his son-in-law Jan Dierckx entered the business, from which date the firm was styled *Brepols & Dierckx*. By 1858, with the participation of Jan Willem Dierckx, the enterprise assumed the title *Brepols & Dierckx Zoon*, which it retained until 1911.

During this period the house emerged as the foremost Belgian producer of playing cards, diversifying for export markets and occasionally employing pseudonymous Anglophone imprints to access English-speaking trade. In addition to playing cards, the firm published liturgical works and stationery. In 1970 its card-making division merged with those of Van Genechten and Biermans to form Cartamundi, now the largest global producer of playing cards.

CONDITIONS: Light crease to upper corner of the Queen of Clubs; overall a very good deck.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing Cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 167–168; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 86; F. A. FOURNIER, Los Naipes, 1982, p. 251, no. 35.

1870

A BELGIAN «GREAT MOGUL» DECK,
AN EXPORT VARIANT OF THE ENGLISH PATTERN

47. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Great Mogul*, probably Turnhout: A. Van Genechten, ca. 1870.

52/52 cards (92 × 62 mm), printed on medium-weight cardstock, square corners, without indices, as typical of mid-nineteenth-century packs predating the introduction of corner indices (ca. 1870–1890). English pattern, IPCS *ENG-1* in its Belgian variant, with double-headed court figures printed in four colours (red, yellow, blue, and black). Numeral cards are plain, printed with standard French suits, Hearts and Diamonds in red, Clubs and Spades in black. The Ace of Spades is ornate, displaying a crowned spade within a heraldic cartouche supported by a lion and unicorn, with the motto *Dieu Pour Tous* and the inscription *Belgian Manufacture* beneath. The upper cartouche remains blank, without a title, a trait associated with anonymous production intended for generic export. An extra title card is included, printed in blue, bearing the bust of the Great Mogul beneath an arch, with the words *Great Mogul* above and below. Card backs printed with a repeating geometric rosette pattern in blue.

€ 800

This complete *Great Mogul* pack represents a Belgian adaptation of the English standard pattern, produced in Turnhout around 1870 for export. It exemplifies the large-scale Belgian card trade of the second half of the nineteenth century, when Turnhout manufacturers rivalled and imitated English makers to supply colonial markets.

ANTOON VAN GENECHTEN (1805–1874) founded his printing establishment in Turnhout in 1837, rapidly becoming one of Belgium's leading cardmakers. His factory expanded steadily, specializing in export decks based on the English pattern. After his death in 1874, the company passed to his heirs and was later incorporated into the Cartamundi group in the twentieth century. Van Genechten's workshop was renowned for its innovation in lithographic printing and for its ambitious export strategy. Its production included a wide range of English-pattern decks (standard, double-ended, *Mogul* quality), as well as more affordable native Belgian packs for regional use. The *Great Mogul* decks were among his most successful international products, competing in both volume and prestige with those of Brepols and Mesmaekers.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use on the Great Mogul card; otherwise, a good deck.

REFERENCES: H. R. D'ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIVe au XXe siècle*, Paris: Hachette, 1906; S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Playing Cards*, New York: U.S. Games Systems; K. LODGE, *The Ace of Spades in Belgian Production*, *The Playing-Card*, in *Journal of the IPCS*, Vol. 32, 2004, pp. 45–52; S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, London: NPI, 1990; *Great Mogul Cards*, World of Playing Cards.



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1875

A FINE SWISS «COSTUMES DECK» PRODUCED IN GERMANY

48. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Costumes cards*. Germany: ca. 1870s.

52/52 engraved playing cards (90 x 60 mm), with French suit symbols, Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, finely printed in colours with hand-applied details, gilt edges. Each of the twelve court cards features male and female figures dressed in the traditional costumes of the Swiss cantons, identified by name and bearing the cantonal coats of arms. Kings are marked by a crown surmounting the suit emblem. The four Aces depict finely rendered, hand-coloured views of notable Swiss cityscapes, serving both as picturesque decoration and as iconic representations of national identity. The reverse pattern consists of a repetitive stippled motif in blue.

€ 1.000

This deck exemplifies the *souvenir playing cards* that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century in response to the expansion of the European tourist industry. Inspired by the dramatic landscapes and cultural diversity of Switzerland, such decks were designed not merely for play but as keepsakes that encapsulated the charm of the Helvetic Confederation.

The development of organized tourism, led by figures such as Thomas Cook, who began offering guided holidays to Switzerland in 1863, generated a growing demand for culturally distinctive and visually appealing items. These cards, likely produced in Frankfurt for sale in Switzerland, catered to the new class of bourgeois travelers seeking commemorative objects that reflected both their personal journeys and their aspirations toward refined cultural taste.

Unlike traditional Swiss playing cards, which used distinct regional suits, Roses, Bells, Acorns, and Shields, this set adopts the more universally recognized French suits, appealing to an international clientele. This shift reveals a deliberate commercial adaptation to the tastes of foreign visitors.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use: overall a good deck.

PROVENANCE: From the Kilian Fritsch collection. Kilian Fritsch was a refined French bibliophile renowned for his passion for the arts of living, particularly fashion, costume, and gastronomy. His collection dedicated to costume and fashion is considered one of the most important private holdings in this field, comprising approximately one thousand works, including books, magazines, and rare periodicals.

REFERENCES: [World of Playing Cards website](#).



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1875

THE DRAGON ACES AND THE «LATER PORTUGUESE» PATTERN
PRINTED IN BELGIUM FOR THE BRAZILIAN MARKET:

49. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Portuguese Deck*. Turnhout: Mesmaekers Frères, 1875.

48/48 cards (85 x 65 mm), stencil hand-painted woodcuts with Dragon Aces, backs of the cards with geometric blue decorations, straight corners.

€ 800

The Portuguese pattern may be distinguished from Spanish and Italian styles by several notable features: stylised dragons on the Aces; Kings seated in armchairs; Queens shown standing, each holding a flower and the emblem of her suit; and Jacks represented full-length. The suit signs also differ in form from both Spanish and Italian models.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Belgian manufacturers, especially those based in Turnhout, played a pivotal role in producing Portuguese playing cards. This was particularly true for exports to Brazil, where historical ties, Portuguese cultural influence, and the enduring popularity of traditional Iberian card games drove significant demand.

The most significant differences between Portuguese-manufactured and Belgian-manufactured Portuguese decks, as exemplified by the deck presented here, include:

- The depiction of the *sota*. In traditional Portuguese decks, the *sota* does not wear a crown and holds a subordinate rank to the knight; in contrast, Belgian-produced export versions sometimes assimilate the *sota* visually to a queen-like standing figure, thereby blurring the hierarchy of the Iberian courts.
- The absence of the small dog traditionally shown at the feet of the Queen of Clubs in Belgian versions.
- The inclusion of a monogram on the Six of Cups, emulating the emblem of the *Real Fábrica de Lisboa*, despite these decks being manufactured outside Portugal.
- The use of lithographic contouring and stencil-based coloration by Belgian producers, particularly Mesmaekers Frères, which refined the visual aesthetic of Portuguese-style cards.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 31-32; F. A. FOURNIER, *Los Naipes*, Museo Fournier, Vitoria: 1892, pp. 105, no. 9; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, p. 56; S. MANN, *All cards on the table*, Verlag, 1980, no. 69 (describing the deck here presented).



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1876-1900
FRENCH MANUFACTURE FOR EXPORT:
CAMOIN SPANISH NATIONAL PATTERN FOR MOROCCO

50. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Cartes Fines*, No. 444. Marseille: A. Camoin & Cie, ca. 1876-1900.

40/40 playing cards (86 × 56 mm), in Spanish suits, printed by colour lithography with stencil colouring. Medium-thickness, slightly ivory-toned card stock; straight corners ("coins aigus"). Blue patterned backs with star medallions on a dotted ground. Preserved in original printed paper wrapper ("Cartes Fines", No. 444, "Spécialité pour l'exportation"). Maker's name on aces and courts; "NAYPES FINOS" on the 4 of Cups.

€ 400

A representative example of the Spanish National pattern in its Marseille export variant, this "No. 444" deck belongs to the well-established production of French manufacturers for North African markets. The preservation of the original wrapper, together with the characteristic star-pattern back, situates the present example within a coherent commercial and cultural network linking Marseille to Mediterranean trade routes.

The iconography retains a series of highly diagnostic features, notably the star-topped sceptre of the King of Cups and the small animal accompanying the Jack of Coins, elements that firmly anchor the deck within the Marseille variant tradition, while the inscription "Naypes finos" further confirms its typological identity and quality designation. Such decks, produced in large quantities yet rarely surviving complete with their original packaging, provide valuable evidence of the circulation of standardized visual models adapted to regional gaming practices, including the 40-card structure widely used in Morocco and neighbouring territories. Their function was both practical and commercial, designed for durability, legibility, and immediate recognition across diverse markets.

The present example, distinguished by its intact wrapper and clear state of preservation, allows a more precise understanding of export-oriented production and distribution strategies in the late nineteenth century. The combination of identifiable state, original packaging, and well-preserved iconographic features gives this deck a particular documentary importance and a distinct appeal for collectors interested in trans-Mediterranean material culture and the history of playing cards.

CONDITIONS: The deck is preserved in good overall condition. The wrapper shows creasing and wear but remains structurally intact and legible.

REFERENCES: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes, *Jeu de cartes à enseignes espagnoles édité pour l'Espagne*, Marseille, A. Camoin & Cie, 1876-1900; The World of Playing Cards, *Playing cards in Morocco* and *Camoin Moroccan pattern*.

1880

HAND COLOURED DECK FOR «JEU DE L'ALUETTE»
THE ONLY FRENCH GAME PLAYED WITH SPANISH-SUITED CARDS

51. [PLAYING CARDS]. *French Deck*. Paris: H. Pussey, 1880.

48/48 cards (83 x 53 mm), xylographic impressions featuring the typical Italian/Spanish four suits, hand-coloured using stencils; printed on thick cardboard; backs decorated with brown tartan patterns; rounded corners. Two of Swords with *Ms^{on} Testu, H. Pussey Succr Paris, Four of Coins* with monogram *H.P.*

€ 700

The Aluette, also known as *Jeu de la Vache* (“Game of the Cow”), *La Vache*, or *Cartes des Pêcheurs* (“Fishermen’s Cards”), is an ancient card game played in western France.

It is a trick-taking game, played by four players, two against two, using 48 cards with Italian/Spanish suits. The game employs a series of codified gestures that allow partners to communicate information about their hands during play.

The oldest form of the word “Aluette” is “Luette,” and the game is mentioned three times by Rabelais in his works: once in *Pantagruel* (1532), again in *Gargantua* (1534), and finally in the *Cinquième Livre*. The *Aluette* is traditionally played in the rural and coastal regions between the Gironde and the Loire estuary, particularly in the departments of Vendée and Loire-Atlantique, as well as in Bretagne and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon.

The game likely originated from Spain and was introduced into France by Spanish sailors in western ports, though, curiously, it seems to have vanished from Spain without leaving any trace. More plausibly, however, the game was born in western France, using the only deck then in existence, the Spanish/Italian-suited pack, which persisted locally even after the general adoption of French suits in the eighteenth century.

CONDITIONS: Two pip cards with minor brown spots or marks; six of coins with slight surface damage to one long edge; overall in good condition.

PROVENANCE: From the Dudley Ollis’ collection.

REFERENCES: W. GURNEY BENHAM, *History of the Pack and Explanations of Its Many Secrets*, Read Books, 2019; H. R. D’ALLEMAGNE, *Antique Playing Cards: A Pictorial Treasury*, I:108-sq, 1996; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021; H. R. D’ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIV au XX siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906.



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1890
THE «MODERN CATALAN PATTERN»

52. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Spanish Deck*, Barcelona: Camps e Hijos, ca. 1890.

48/48 cards (90 x 54 mm), stencil hand-coloured woodcuts, in four suits of 12 cards each, featuring typical Spanish-suited motifs: Four of Cups with a Spanish-style decoration depicting a deer and inscribed *De una Hoja*; Four of Coins, adorned with a Spanish-style decoration incorporating bow and arrows. The *versos* are hand-painted in lilac.

€ 700

The present deck is attributed to the *Modern Spanish Catalan Pattern* (corresponding to classification S-1.12). This design signifies a substantial evolution in Spanish playing cards from 1850 onward. Typically composed of either 40 or 48 cards (the deck here illustrated comprises 48 cards), it adheres to the customary Spanish layout (classification S-1.1).

While it remains largely traditional, its principal distinguishing feature is the unique design of the cups, rendered as chalices with a flat base, evocative of an “egg cup”, which unequivocally characterizes the Catalan variant. Notably, 19th designs by Manuel Bertschinger (1833) and J. Sabates (1853) already exhibit elements that would later become characteristic of this pattern, such as the depiction of the Jack of Cups in the act of wrapping his cloak around himself. The court figures, typically clean-shaven and youthful, portray kings whose calves are visible beneath their robes; the clubs are uniformly executed, while the Ace of Coins traditionally features a crowned coin adorned with mercantile insignia. The Barcelona region, a flourishing production centre for playing cards from the late nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, played a pivotal role in disseminating the *Modern Spanish Catalan Pattern* both within Spain and internationally. Renowned producers include Sebastian Comas y Ricart, Alejo Gabarró, Wenceslao Guarro, Ramirez, Juan Roura, José Samso, and Torras y Lleó, occasionally grouped under the designation *Fabricantes de Naipes de España*, as well as notable printing establishments such as *La Balear* of Palma de Mallorca, and Heraclio Fournier of Vitoria.

CONDITIONS: Apparently unused.

REFERENCES: K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 27-28; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 247-256; S. MANN, *All cards on the table*, Verlag, 1980, nos. 31-34; Fournier, Spain, no. 490. IPCS pattern sheet 21.



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1890

RARE «MYTHO-TRANSPARENTES»
A FIN-DE-SIÈCLE CONVERGENCE OF EROTIC ART AND MAGIC
IN A FRENCH TRANSLUCENT DECK OF CARDS

53. [EROTIC/CONJURER DECK]. *Mytho-Transparentes*. Paris (?): J.D. (J. David?), circa 1890.

16/16 lithographed translucent cards (98 × 70 mm), printed on thin laminated double-layer paper, preserved in the original small 8vo box (105 × 80 mm). Images executed by collotype or coarse halftone, hand-coloured in stencil (*pochoir*), and concealed between the two thin sheets so as to appear only in transparency. Each card bears two to four pip signs of the French suits (Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, Spades), placed within a single-line black border. The indices are slightly displaced towards the margins, an artifice designed for use in conjuring tricks. The interiors conceal chromolithographic erotic images in pseudo-mythological settings, visible only when backlit. Signature “DAVID PARIS” in red ink appears on several cards. Versos blank. Preserved in the original sliding box of yellow card stock, sides printed *MYTHO-TRANSPARENTES – SÉRIE PHOTOS*; upper and lower covers decorated with polychrome illustrations of nude mythological figures, including the Three Graces.

€ 1.500

A rare and unusual product of Belle Époque Paris, this French deck merges the traditions of translucent novelty cards and erotic imagery. Under normal light, the cards appear almost blank, bearing only their pip indices, yet when held against a light source, they reveal hidden images of nude female figures in classical or allegorical guise, accompanied by suggestive captions such as *Diane*, *L'Hiver*, *Circé*, *Syrinx*, *La Douche*, or *Vénus sortant de l'onde*.

The partial placement of the suits, intentionally arranged at the card margins, facilitated their use in sleight-of-hand and forcing techniques by magicians. The deck thus represents a hybrid object, standing at the crossroads of entertainment, eroticism, and illusionism. Unlike standard playing-card packs, it comprises only sixteen cards, marking it as a curiosity rather than a functional game. The sparse arrangement of pip symbols at the edges recalls the manipulation decks favored by prestidigitators.

The seemingly blank central field conceals lithographed images of female nudes produced through photomechanical printing and enriched by *pochoir* colouring. Some images bear captions that cloak their eroticism beneath a mythological or allegorical pretext.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: T. DENNING, *Translucent Playing-cards*, Birmingham: Denning, 1976; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 66-67.

1890

«FIN-DE-SIÈCLE» MAGIC ON PAPER

HUMOURS AND SLEIGHT-OF-HAND IN A RARE FRENCH CONJURER'S PACK

54. [CONJURER DECK]. *Cartes Changeantes*. Paris: David, ca. 1890.

Complete set of 8 cards (80 × 53 mm), chromolithographed and finished with hand-colouring, printed on thin card stock. The rectos display humorous caricatures of female figures drawn from the domestic sphere, each accompanied by a French caption and framed with the conventional symbols of the French suits (Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, Spades). The versos are decorated with a printed blue pattern consisting of a regular sequence of small lozenge-shaped motifs, each enclosing a central dot, arranged upon an ivory ground with fine vertical ruling. Preserved in the original paper wrapper, printed with the imprint *David à Paris* and *Article Français n° 17*, together with the printer's details: *Imp. H. Barbou, 6 Rue Pierre-Chausson, Paris*. Condition excellent, with vivid colours and paper structurally sound.

€ 1.200

This ensemble does not belong to the established tradition of gaming packs but rather to the specialized category of conjuring cards. Conceived as a comic accessory for parlor magic, it presents caricatured domestic female figures designed to provoke both laughter and surprise during performance. By combining pictorial satire with the familiar format of a playing-card deck, the pack provided conjurers with a versatile prop for humorous revelations, comic predictions, and visual transformations.

The eight subjects are identified by captions written in the first person of an implied protagonist: *Mon Épouse* ("My Wife"), *Ma Belle-Mère* ("My Mother-in-Law"), *Tante Zoé* ("Aunt Zoé"), *Ma Cousine* ("My Cousin"), *Ma Portière* ("My Concierge"), *La Fille de ma Portière* ("The Concierge's Daughter"), *Mon Ancienne Bonne* ("My Former Maid"), among others. Each figure, rendered in caricatural style, is surrounded by suit symbols whose distribution varies from card to card. These marks were not merely decorative but served as a secret code, enabling the magician to identify instantly the chosen card.

Issued in Paris around 1890–1900, the deck belongs to the series of conjuring novelties produced by *Maison David, Paris*. The cards reflect the *Belle Époque* taste for caricature and domestic satire, familiar from humorous journals such as *Le Chat Noir* or *L'Assiette au Beurre*. At the same time, they illustrate the flourishing of French conjuring in the post-Robert-Houdin era, when parlor magicians combined technical ingenuity with comic performance.

CONDITIONS: Original box somewhat worn; the deck itself is in perfect preservation.

REFERENCES: A. KOLI, *Jeux miniatures – Jeux David*. Collection de Jeux Anciens.



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1890
HAND COLOURED DECK FOR «JEU DE L'ALUETTE»
THE ONLY FRENCH GAME PLAYED WITH SPANISH-SUITED CARDS

55. [PLAYING CARDS]. *French Deck*. Paris: Grimaud, ca. 1890.

48/48 cards (87 x 56 mm), xylographic impressions featuring the typical Italian/Spanish four suits, hand-coloured using stencils, printed on thick cardboard; backs decorated with blue patterns; square corners. Ace of Coins inscribed *B.P. Grimaud, Paris*; court cards marked *B.-P. Grimaud France*.

€ 600

The *Aluette*, also known as *Jeu de la Vache* (“Game of the Cow”), *La Vache*, or *Cartes des Pêcheurs* (“Fishermen’s Cards”), is an ancient card game played in western France.

It is a trick-taking game played by four players, two against two, using forty-eight cards with Italian/Spanish suits. The game is characterized by a series of codified gestures that allow partners to communicate information about their hands during play.

The oldest form of the word “Aluette” is “Luette,” and the game is mentioned three times by Rabelais in his works: once in *Pantagruel* (1532), then in *Gargantua* (1534), and finally in the *Cinquième Livre*. The *Aluette* is traditionally practised in rural and coastal areas between the Gironde and the Loire estuary, particularly in the departments of Vendée and Loire-Atlantique, as well as in Bretagne and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon.

The game likely originated in Spain and was brought to France by Spanish sailors in western ports, though, curiously, it appears to have disappeared from Spain without leaving any trace. More plausibly, however, it was born in western France, using the only deck then in existence, the Spanish/Italian-suited pack, which persisted locally despite the widespread conversion to French suits completed in the eighteenth century.

PROVENANCE: Tax stamp *Avril 12 1890 République Française*, used in France from 1890 to 1917 on Two of Swords.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: W. GURNEY BENHAM, *History of the Pack and Explanations of Its Many Secrets*, Read Books, 2019; H. R. D’ALLEMAGNE, *Antique Playing Cards: A Pictorial Treasury*, I:108-sq, 1996; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021; H. R. D’ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIV au XX siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906.



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1895

THE «COMPAÑÍA GENERAL DE FÓSFOROS» PLAYING CARDS:
INDUSTRIAL MANUFACTURE AND IBERIAN TRADITION
IN LATE 19TH CENTURY ARGENTINA

56. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Modern Spanish Catalan Pattern*. Buenos Aires: Compañía General de Fósforos, ca. 1895.

40/40 cards (100 × 60 mm), printed by chromoxylographic process, card backs decorated with a marbled red pattern. The deck conforms to the *Modern Spanish Catalan Pattern*. The Four of Cups bears the name and address of the printer, *Compañía General de Fósforos, California 1270, Buenos Aires*, together with the legend *Los únicos transparentes de una hoja*, indicating single-sheet production.

€ 750

This Argentine deck, produced by the *Compañía General de Fósforos* in Buenos Aires, exemplifies a local adaptation of the *Modern Spanish Catalan Pattern*, widely disseminated from Spain to Latin America during the nineteenth century. The presence of the Minerva tax stamp securely dates its manufacture after 1891, situating the production within the first decade of Argentine fiscal regulation on playing cards. The inscription advertising “single-sheet transparency” reflects contemporary innovations in card production, while the printed address confirms its Buenos Aires origin.

The *Compañía General de Fósforos*, founded in 1889 and based at Calle California 1270, Buenos Aires, emerged from the consolidation of Argentine match factories financed predominantly with French capital. Its activities soon extended into various branches of industrial production, including the printing of playing cards. The firm sought to compete with imported Spanish packs by offering locally produced alternatives that were both more affordable and tailored to Argentine tastes.

The adoption of the *Modern Spanish Catalan Pattern* in Buenos Aires is emblematic of the transatlantic cultural exchanges between Spain and its former colonies, where Iberian playing-card traditions remained deeply rooted.

CONDITIONS: Marks of use on the cards; overall, a good complete deck.

PROVENANCE: Tax stamp ‘REPÚBLICA ARGENTINA’ and ‘IMPUESTOS INTERNOS’ on Four of Cups showing the head of Mercury in black facing left, used for locally made cards while red stamps were used for imported cards. This stamp was in use 1895 to 1902.

REFERENCES: S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, London: Arco Publications, 1966; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, pp. 27-30; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of Playing Cards*, Dover Publications, 2021, pp. 247-256.



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1895

FROM BARCELONA TO THE RÍO DE LA PLATA:
A SCARCE EXAMPLE OF SPANISH PLAYING CARDS
PRINTED IN BUENOS AIRES AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

57. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Modern Spanish Catalan pattern*. Buenos Aires: Francisco Gribau y H.no, ca. 1895.

40/40 cards (100 × 60.3 mm), chromolithography on medium-weight cream-toned card stock. Backs with a repeated geometric diaper pattern of elongated diamonds filled with short parallel horizontal strokes, printed in black on a beige ground.

€ 850

The deck belongs to the *Modern Spanish Catalan Pattern* (IPCS, Pattern Sheet 46). The imagery comprises the traditional four suits, Cups, Coins, Swords, and Clubs, each containing seven numeral cards and three courts (*sota*, *caballo*, *rey*). The aces are of the standard Catalan type: the Ace of Cups represented as a monumental chalice, the Ace of Coins bearing a crowned medallion with a female bust portrait, the Ace of Swords with crossed sabres, and the Ace of Clubs with a leafy branch. The court cards are executed in the late nineteenth-century Catalan style, with simplified but recognizable attire and iconographic conventions derived from Barcelona prototypes. On the Four of Cups appear the printer's device and the inscription *Francisco Gribau y H.no, Piedao 2260, Buenos Aires y Barcelona*, together with the tax stamp. This complete deck of Spanish playing cards, printed by Francisco Gribau and his brother in Buenos Aires towards the end of the nineteenth century, illustrates the transplantation of Iberian traditions into South America, adapting the Catalan visual canon to the growing market of immigrant communities in Argentina. The deck stands as a testament to the hybrid production between Barcelona and Buenos Aires and is among the few surviving examples of Gribau's documented activity.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use on all cards; overall, a very good complete deck.

PROVENANCE: *República Argentina* and *Impuestos Internos* on the Four of Cups, depicting the head of Mercury in black facing left, used for locally made cards, while red stamps were reserved for imported packs. This black stamp was in use from 1895 to 1902.

REFERENCES: S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, London: Arco Publications, 1966; International Playing-Card Society, *Pattern Sheet no. 46*; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, pp. 27-30; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of Playing Cards*, Dover Publications, 2021, pp. 247-256.



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1895

AN ITALIAN-SPANISH «CADIZ PATTERN» EXPORT DECK FOR CHILE:
GENOESE PRINTING AND THE GLOBAL NAIPES TRADE

58. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Faustino Solesio, Naipes a cuatro palos españoles*. Genoa: Solesio, Fábrica de Naipes Finos, 1895.

48/48 cards (96 × 64 mm), printed in chromoxylography on stiff card, backs decorated with a blue lattice pattern.

€ 1.000

The deck belongs to the *Cadiz Pattern* (IPCS Pattern Sheet no. 23), characterized by vertical “upright cups”, male figures in short breeches with puffed sleeves, and starred designs on the suit of Coins. Several cards bear additional typographical inscriptions, including the maker’s name and place *F. Solesio, Genova*, advertising slogans such as *Naipes de una hoja – Primer florete* and *Vitela de hilo*, and commemorative legends recalling medals won by the factory at international exhibitions (for example Paris 1869 and Antwerp 1885).

On the Five of Coins appears a portrait of King Leopold II of Belgium, labelled *Anvers 1885*, celebrating the medal obtained at the Antwerp Universal Exhibition. The Ace of Coins is adorned with the factory’s emblematic medallion inscribed *F. Solesio, Genova*, framed by heraldic devices. The wrapper, in pale blue with gilt printing, bears the legend *Fábrica de Naipes Finos de Solesio Faustino – Genova*, warns against counterfeiting, and specifies export *Fabricadas especialmente para Chile*. The dating *Año de 1895* appears on the Five of Clubs, confirming the year of production. The deck is without Italian fiscal stamps, as expected for export copies.

This deck is a remarkable example of late nineteenth-century Italian playing-card production for the overseas market, consisting of the full forty-eight cards in the Spanish suits of Cups, Coins, Clubs, and Swords. It displays the canonical traits of the *Cadiz Pattern* while incorporating commercial inscriptions, prize-medal iconography, and promotional slogans.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved, in its original wrapper.

REFERENCES: K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, pp. 27–28; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of Playing Cards*, Dover Publications, 2021, pp. 247–256; S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Verlag, 1980, nos. 31–34; J. FOURNIER, *Catalogue of the Fournier Museum of Playing Cards*, Vitoria: Fournier, no. 490; H. R. D’ALEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIV au XX siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906; I.P.C.S., *Pattern Sheet no. 23*; R. SOMERVILLE, *Cádiz-Catalan Style Pack by Sebastián Comas, 1896*, The World of Playing Cards, 2010.



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1895

A TRANSITIONAL ARMANINO EXPORT DECK:
THE PIACENTINE PATTERN FOR FOREIGN MARKETS

59. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Carte da Giuoco Piacentine*. Rome: Fabbrica di Carte da Giuoco già Fratelli Armanino, ca. 1895.

40/40 cards (95 × 50 mm), printed by chromoxylography and stencil colouring on medium-weight unwatermarked card. Backs printed in dark blue with a typographic cross-hatched diamond grid pattern and the inscription *Fabbrica di Carte da Giuoco in Genova – Fratelli Armanino*. The deck follows the *Piacentine* pattern, with four suits of ten cards each: *Denari*, *Coppe*, *Spade*, and *Bastoni*. The *Asso di Denari* depicts a crowned single-headed eagle enclosing a circular legend *Fabbrica di Carte da Giuoco già Fratelli Armanino – Roma – Carte per l'Eestero*, printed in black. The remaining aces retain the traditional Piacentine iconography: the *Asso di Spade* with the allegorical figure of Justice, the *Asso di Coppe* with a neoclassical vase, and the *Asso di Bastoni* with a short club entwined with laurel and ribbons. The court figures, King, Knight, and Jack, are rendered as full-length figures typical of the late nineteenth-century Piacentine style, in vivid tones of red, green, ochre, and blue, with clear outlines and precise stencil application.

€ 700

This deck exemplifies the *Piacentine* pattern as produced by the Armanino firm during its Roman period, following the relocation of its manufacturing from Genoa in the early 1890s. The simultaneous presence of Genoese and Roman imprints suggests a transitional stage in the company's operations, when printing plates from the original Ligurian workshop continued to be used while distribution was coordinated from the new Roman address.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: The Ace of Coins bears the rare circular imprint “*Carte per l'Eestero*”, a fiscal and export-control mark without monetary value, used on editions exempt from domestic taxation and destined for foreign export.

REFERENCES: MUSEO FOURNIER DE NAIPES, *Catálogo General de Barajas*, Vitoria-Gasteiz: Diputación Foral de Álava, 1994, pp. 118–119; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth: 1983, pp. 18–22; *The playing-card journal of the International Playing-Card Society*, Vol. 51, no. 1, pp 28–36.



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1903

A SINGLE-HEADED EAGLE FOR THE KINGDOM:
AN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY VARIANT

60. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Piacentine Pattern*. Bari: Officina del Cavaliere Guglielmo Murari, 1903.

40/40 cards (85 × 50 mm), lithographically printed and stencil-coloured in the traditional palette. Medium-weight, non-watermarked card stock. Backs printed typographically with a black floral pattern; the printed sheet slightly folded over onto the recto margins (1–2 mm), a characteristic feature of late-nineteenth-century Italian manufacture. The pack consists of four Latin suits (Cups, Coins, Swords, Clubs), each of ten cards (Ace, 2–7, Knave, Knight, King), with full-length, single-headed figures typical of the Piacentine regional pattern.

€ 700

Each suit follows the canonical Piacentine iconography as codified in the Italian regional pattern sheets, IPCS *Piacentine Pattern*. The Coins (Denari) include the crowned Savoy shield on the Four of Coins and, on the Ace, a large circular coin surrounded by a single-headed eagle enclosing the maker's inscription "CAV. GUG. MURARI BARI." The Cups (Coppe) show monumental chalices with small heraldic ornaments at their bases; the Swords (Spade) are straight and non-crossed, the Ace decorated with a cherub or putto holding a garland; and the Clubs (Bastoni) are knotted branches bearing the customary mask device on the Three.

The figures remain fully drawn and unaffected by Liberty or early-Art-Deco influences, confirming a date close to the turn of the century. The colour scheme, yellow, red, green, and blue, is vibrant and remarkably well preserved. The single-headed eagle on the Ace of Coins does not denote a distinct pattern but rather a specific Murari workshop variant, documented in other contemporary printings from Bari.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: The Ace of Coins bears the printed legend "CAV. GUG. MURARI BARI" and a circular Italian fiscal stamp "REGNO D'ITALIA – CENTESIMI 30" with a clearly legible cancellation reading "OTT. 1903".

REFERENCES: World of Playing Cards, *Piacentine Pattern Playing Cards*, Online article, 2018.



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1906

BELGIAN CRAFT FOR THE IBERIAN MARKET:
A REFINED SPANISH-SUITED PACK PRINTED IN TURNHOUT

61. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Turnhout Spanish pattern*. Turnhout: 1906.

40/40 cards (88 × 58 mm), lithographic line drawing with stenciled colouring on card stock, backs printed with a repeating geometric motif in red. The deck is composed of four suits within the Spanish system. It belongs to the so-called *Turnhout Spanish Pattern* (IPCS *Pattern 39*), a Belgian interpretation distinguished by its naturalistic figures, refined proportions, and use of thin double borders. The printing shows etched-style outlines with carefully controlled stenciled colouring in green, red, and yellow. No fiscal stamps appear on the cards, and the dating rests on the inscribed year on the Four of Swords.

€ 500

This is a complete and well-preserved example of the *Turnhout Spanish Pattern*, a refined Belgian interpretation of Spanish-suited cards dated 1906. Distinguished by its heraldic emblems, delicate lithographic outlines, and balanced stenciled colouring, it represents one of the most successful and original departures from the crude woodcut imitations often associated with non-Iberian Spanish decks.

The deck follows the standard Spanish composition of forty cards divided into the suits of Cups, Swords, Coins, and Clubs, each with *rey*, *caballo*, *sota*, and numerals 1–7. The Aces display large emblematic designs: the Ace of Cups as a covered chalice, the Ace of Swords as a decorated weapon entwined with a ribbon, the Ace of Clubs as a leafy branch with sprouting oak, and the Ace of Coins as a shielded device with castles and lions recalling *Castile and León*. The Four of Cups is enriched with a crowned lion within a laurel wreath, while the Four of Swords bears the printed date *Año de 1906* framed by flowers. The court figures, kings in stockings and breeches, cavaliers in plumed hats, and *Sotas* grasping their suit symbols, are drawn with notable elegance and occupy the lower portion of the card against an open background, consistent with the Turnhout style.

CONDITIONS: A very good deck.

REFERENCES: S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, London: Arco Publications, 1966; International Playing-Card Society, *Turnhout Spanish pattern*, no. 39; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, pp. 27–30; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of Playing Cards*, Dover Publications, 2021, pp. 247–256.

1910

THE GREAT SOUTHWEST SOUVENIR PLAYING CARDS:
FRED HARVEY AND THE SANTA FE RAILWAY

62. [PLAYING CARDS]. *The Great Southwest Souvenir Playing Cards*. Kansas City, Missouri: Fred Harvey, ca. 1910.

54/54 cards, (88 × 63 mm), chromolithographic printing on card stock, versos with a central vignette depicting mounted Native Americans within a coloured tartan-style frame, all edges gilt, rounded corners. Standard French suit system of 52 cards divided into four suits of thirteen (Ace to 10, Knave, Queen, King), with indices in opposite corners, accompanied by a Joker and an additional map card. Each card bears an oval monochrome photographic vignette, printed in tinted halftone (green, ochre, blue, or sepia according to suit), illustrating Native American portraits, hotel buildings, railway stations, and views of the American Southwest. The *Joker* is inscribed *The Great Southwest Souvenir Playing Cards, Made and Published Exclusively for Fred Harvey, Kansas City, Mo.* The map card shows the United States with Santa Fe railway lines and Harvey House locations.

€ 650

This deck must be understood within the broader context of the expansion of the *Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway*, which in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries commissioned Fred Harvey to establish a network of hotels and restaurants, the celebrated *Harvey Houses*, along its routes. These establishments not only provided reliable dining and lodging but also played a central role in shaping the tourist image of the American Southwest. Playing cards such as these were conceived as portable souvenirs and marketing devices, combining entertainment with visual promotion. The choice of photographic subjects, portraits of Native Americans, railway infrastructures, and Southwestern landscapes, reflects both the commercial appropriation of Indigenous iconography and the romanticized vision of the *Great Southwest* as a space of modern travel and exotic authenticity. As such, this deck is emblematic of the dialogue between tourism, advertising, and cultural representation in early twentieth-century America.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: C. GOODMAN, *The Fred Harvey Houses of the Southwest*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977; M. DAWSON, *Souvenir Playing Cards in America 1890–1930*, Chicago: IPCS Journal, 2004, Vol. 32, pp. 117–132; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 110–111; C. P HARGRAVE, *A History of Playing Cards*, Dover Editions, 2021, pp. 307–310.



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1912

BELGIAN CRAFT FOR THE HISPANIC WORLD:
A SURVIVAL OF BIERMANS' SPANISH PLAYING CARDS WITH ORIGINAL WRAPPER

63. [PLAYING CARDS]. BIERMANS, LÉONARD. *Modern Spanish Catalan Pattern. A Todos Alumbra – Naypes Refinos*. Turnhout: L. Biermans, 1912.

40/40 cards (93 × 60 mm), woodcut outlines with stencil colouring, printed on medium-thickness cardboard. The backs feature a diagonal checkered pattern in blue and red lines on a cream ground. The deck is preserved together with its original thin brown paper wrapper, printed in blue with a central radiant sun motif and the inscription *A Todos Alumbra*, surrounded by four rosettes and decorative borders. The Ace of Coins carries the legend *R. EA DE M. D.* and the date *Año 1912* beneath a lion holding a shield, while the Four of Cups bears the inscription *Naypes Refinos*. The suits are Coins, Cups, Clubs, and Swords, in the traditional Spanish configuration, with court cards comprising King (12), Knight (11), and Knave (10). The style belongs to the *Modern Spanish Catalan Pattern*, here produced by Biermans, and displays a variant distinguished by inscriptions imitating Spanish and South American makers (notably Solesio) who had adopted the same motto. The colouring in strong red, green, blue, and yellow tones is typical of Biermans' stencilled production of the early twentieth century.

€ 550

The production of Spanish-suited playing cards in Belgium, especially in Turnhout, was a major phenomenon of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Belgian printers supplied not only European markets but also exported extensively to South America, where Spanish-suited cards predominated. The motto *A Todos Alumbra* ("It shines on everyone") was borrowed directly from Spanish-Italian makers such as Solesio, who had established strong distribution networks in Latin America. Biermans' high-quality adaptation of foreign patterns ensured his prominence in this international trade.

The Catalan pattern itself descends from seventeenth-century Spanish models, notable for their stylised court figures, firm outlines, and simplified iconography, which allowed it to spread successfully across Spain and its colonies.

CONDITIONS: The wrapper shows folded margins and traces of handling: overall, a very good complete deck.

REFERENCES: S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, London: Arco Publications, 1966; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, pp. 27-30; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of Playing Cards*, Dover Publications, 2021, pp. 247-256; International Playing-Card Society, *Pattern Sheet no. 46*.



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1916

FIRST AND ONLY EDITION:
FROM BAYONET TO BRUSHSTROKE

ITALY'S MOST CAUSTIC PLAYING CARDS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR:
SATIRE, SYMBOLISM, AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

64. [PLAYING CARDS]. SACCHETTI, ENRICO. *Carte da giuoco nazionali*. Milan: Istituto Editoriale Italiano, s.d. [but Summer 1916].

40/40 cards [89 × 58 mm], lithographically printed on stiff card stock; Italian suits (Latin pattern): Swords, Batons, Cups, Coins. Variant of the Romagnolo-Pugliese type, without indices, comprising ten cards per suit (Ace, 2–7, Knave, Knight, King). Back design with an orange stair motif within a yellow oval on a green ground, featuring a stylised Italian dagger entwined with a green serpent, enclosed by a ruled black frame. Complete with the original publisher's box of thick printed card, with red titling. A rare wartime satirical deck ridiculing the Central Powers through personified suits.

€ 1.300

This remarkable Italian playing-card deck was conceived by the celebrated caricaturist Enrico Sacchetti during the summer of 1916, at the height of Italy's involvement in the First World War. Departing from the conventions of ordinary decks, the *Carte da giuoco nazionali* served a propagandistic purpose: each suit allegorically represents one of the Central Powers, caricaturing their national stereotypes through grotesque and acerbic imagery.

The figures are rendered in Sacchetti's unmistakable angular and anti-heroic style, familiar from his wartime posters and from *La Tradotta*, the illustrated trench journal of the Italian army. The Aces display weapons or trophies emblematic of each nation, while the knaves and knights portray infantrymen and mounted officers respectively.

Issued by the "Istituto Editoriale Italiano" of Milan, the deck was marketed as an inexpensive patriotic item, sold at *Lire 3* (compared with *Lire 3.50* for the French-suited 52-card variant), as attested in surviving publisher's ephemera. It was distributed both for civilian amusement and among soldiers at the front. Because of its modest print run and ephemeral nature, very few examples have survived.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: Ace of Swords bearing the Italian fiscal stamp *Regno d'Italia 10-8-1916*.

REFERENCES: *Atti del Congresso 2015*, Italian Ministry of Defence, p. 130.



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1922

THE «LEMBERG PATTERN TYPE II - MOHREN-DEUTSCHE»
A COMPLETE GERMAN DECK IN THE ORIGINAL BOX

65. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Austrian Deck*, Wien: Ferd. Piatnik & Sohne, ca. 1922.

32/32 cards (100 x 65 mm), chromolithography, *Daus* of Acorns and Hearts with maker's details (in German and Polish), eight of Bells with jockey logo and Austrian tax stamp, original wrapper (some tears and small losses) bearing 1920 tax band and USA tax sticker, and titled *Polnische National 111*.

€ 700

This antique deck exemplifies the «Lemberg Pattern Type II», also known as «Mohren-Deutsche» (Moors cards with German suit signs), IPCS Pattern 96, a German-suited card design that gained prominence in the mid-19th century. The Lemberg Pattern originated around 1815, likely introduced by Johann Norbert Hofmann in Vienna. Its creation coincided with a European fascination for exotic cultures, depicting African, Ottoman Balkan, and Chinese figures. From Vienna, the pattern spread to eastern regions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, notably produced by Johann Wagner in Pest and Daniel Reich in Kronstadt (now Braşov, Romania) from around 1825. By the mid-19th century, the design evolved into what is classified as Type II, featuring notable alterations in the illustrations.

This version became especially prevalent in Galicia, centered in Lemberg (now Lviv, Ukraine), where it was standardized and widely used. The deck typically comprises 32 or 36 cards, including *Daus* (Deuce), King, Ober, Unter, and numerals from Ten to Six; post-1850 editions often included the «Weli» card (Six of Bells with the inscription «Weli»). German suits (Hearts, Bells, Leaves, and Acorns) are employed, and among the key distinctions of Type II is the depiction of the King of Leaves riding a furious horse, as well as redesigned motifs on most numeral cards. Exotic figures, Moors, Chinese individuals, and selected Europeans, reflect the 19th-century European fascination with diverse cultures.

PROVENANCE: 1. Dudley Ollis' collection. 2. Tax stamp in use in Austria from 1920 to 1925. The text is *Österr. Kartenstempel*, the eagle has a sickle and a hammer in the claws and the value is given in Kronen, 2 K.

CONDITIONS: Apparently unused.

REFERENCES: S. MANN, *Alle Karten auf den Tisch – All Cards on the Table*, Leinfelden and Marburg: 1990, Vol. I, pp. 102, 265; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 58.



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1928

A TRIESTINE INTERPRETATION OF THE «SCHWERDTER-DEUTSCHE» PATTERN:
FUSION OF TRIESTINE CRAFT AND CENTRAL-EUROPEAN TRADITION

66. [GAME]. *Sehr feine Schwerdter-Deutsche No. 93*. Trieste: S. D. Modiano, 1928.

36/36 cards (105 × 60 mm), printed in colours on thick card stock; geometric back pattern in dark green and grey. Traditional German suits, Acorns, Leaves, Hearts, and Bells, executed in clear stencil-style chromolithography. On the *Six of Hearts* appears a printed cartouche reading *S. D. Modiano, Triest*, while the *Two of Acorns* bears the inscription *Sehr feine Schwerdter-Deutsche* within a scroll supported by a heraldic lion. On the *Seven of Bells* is the centaur trademark and the bilingual inscription *Schutzmarke / S. D. Modiano Trieste*, characteristic of the firm's export production. The deck retains its original printed envelope.

€ 700

The pack belongs to the *Schwerdter-Deutsche* tradition, named after the town of Schwerte in Westphalia, distinguished by its strong heraldic figures and bold chromatic contrasts. This Triestine edition represents Modiano's adaptation of a Central-European pattern for the Mitteleuropean market, combining German iconography with Italian fiscal control.

The composition follows the standard German thirty-six-card sequence: each suit (Acorns, Leaves, Hearts, and Bells) contains nine values, King, Over, Under, Ten, Nine, Eight, Seven, Six, and *Daus* (Two), the latter replacing the conventional Ace as the highest numeral card. The court figures exhibit the classic *Schwerdter* attire: elongated proportions, broad hats, stylised moustaches, and military tunics rendered with clean stencil outlines and saturated colours. The *Daus* cards are especially ornate, with the Acorns showing the lion and the legend *Sehr feine Schwerdter-Deutsche*, and the Hearts featuring floral cartouches.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved in the original printed envelope.

PROVENANCE: The Seven of Bells carries a blue Italian tax stamp "Regno d'Italia Lire Tre", with the Mercury effigy facing right, post-1925 issue, and an oval cancellation dated February 1928.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 124, 130, 146; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 50; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 100-102.



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1929

COMMEMORATING THE DISCOVERY AND COLONIZATION OF THE AMERICAS,
DESIGNED BY L. PALAO AND PRINTED BY «VIUDA E HIJOS DE HERACLIO FOURNIER»

67. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Naipes Históricos Ibero-Americanos*. Vitoria (Spain): Fournier, 1929.

40/40 cards, (96 × 62 mm), printed in chromolithography on stiff card. Reverse with an elaborate design depicting the coat of arms of Spain under Charles I, framed by the Order of the Golden Fleece, the Pillars of Hercules with the motto *Plus Ultra*, and an external border incorporating the arms of Portugal together with the twenty-two coats of arms of the American republics, with the royal arms of Castile, Aragon, León, and Navarre at the four corners. The deck follows a Spanish-suited structure but with commemorative historical imagery. Complete with the original slipcase of textured green paperboard, printed with a large chromolithographic vignette of Christopher Columbus in a medallion flanked by allegorical figures, crowned by a crucifix, and with the arms of Spain beneath, inscribed *Exposición Ibero Americana MCMXXIX*. Accompanied by the original twenty-page explanatory booklet, printed letterpress, describing the symbolism, subjects, and historical background of the cards.

€ 600

This commemorative pack was issued by Fournier in 1929 for the great *Exposiciones Internacionales* of Seville and Barcelona. Designed by Luis Palao, it represents, through the traditional Spanish suits, the monarchs, explorers, and indigenous leaders associated with the discovery and colonization of the Americas. Richly chromolithographed, it was conceived as a visual and didactic celebration of Spain's role in early modern global expansion and remains one of Fournier's most ambitious historical issues. The collaboration between Fournier, already Spain's most prestigious cardmaker, and the artist Luis Palao demonstrates the ambition of the enterprise, which combined technical mastery, historical symbolism, and propagandistic intent in one of the firm's most distinguished productions. The suits of *oros*, *copas*, and *espadas* are dedicated to the reigns of Ferdinand V, Charles I, and Philip II, the monarchs under whom the discovery and colonization of the New World took place. The suit of *bastos* represents indigenous leaders, fauna, flora, and symbols of the pre-Columbian world.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: A Spanish fiscal stamp of 1.20 pesetas appears on the Five of Swords.

REFERENCES: F. A. FOURNIER, *Los Naipes*, Vitoria: 1980, pp. 86, no. 676.



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1940
THE «DVOUHLAVÉ HRÁČI KARTY PATTERN»

68. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Czechoslovak deck*. Prague: Miracle, ca. 1940.

32/32 cards (110 x 64 mm), chromolithography, arranged in four suits of eight cards each, consisting of Acorns, Leaves, Hearts, and Bells, with court cards and pip cards from 7 to 10 for the game of Piquet. The court cards are double-ended, divided by a central horizontal line. The *Seven of Bells* bears the printer's device, while the backs display a richly detailed white and green decoration with printer data enclosed within a white oval. The deck is preserved in its original box with the inscription *Miraklin no. 99 Doppeldeutsc. Dvouhlavé c. 99* and printer details.

€ 250

This deck exemplifies the *Dvouhlavé Hráči Karty, Tell Pattern Type 4 – Wilhelm Tell*, part of a lineage of German-suited playing cards popular throughout the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and its successor states. Although the fundamental iconography originates in Friedrich Schiller's drama *Wilhelm Tell* (1804), the Type 4 deck is specifically associated with the modifications introduced by Austrian cardmakers around 1859.

In contrast to earlier versions, such as the original Hungarian double-figure deck (Type 1, IPCS no. 90) and the subsequent Type 2 (IPCS no. 91), these newer designs replaced two principal figures on the *Ober of Bells* and the *Unter of Hearts* with characters considered more historically or narratively significant within Schiller's play.

All cards are double-figured, printed in vivid colour lithography or chromolithography characteristic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The *Seven of Bells* traditionally bears the maker's imprint and, when applicable, a tax or revenue stamp.

CONDITIONS: Apparently unused.

REFERENCES: S. MANN, *All cards on the table*, Verlag, 1980, nos. 117–119; Fournier, no. 161.

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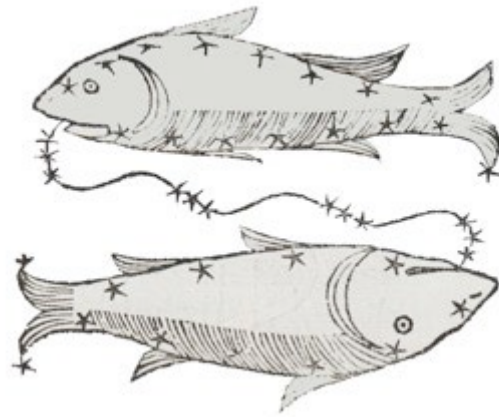
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