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TAROT AND PLAYING CARDS

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Lot 5. *Early Tarot*. Ferdinando Gumpenberg

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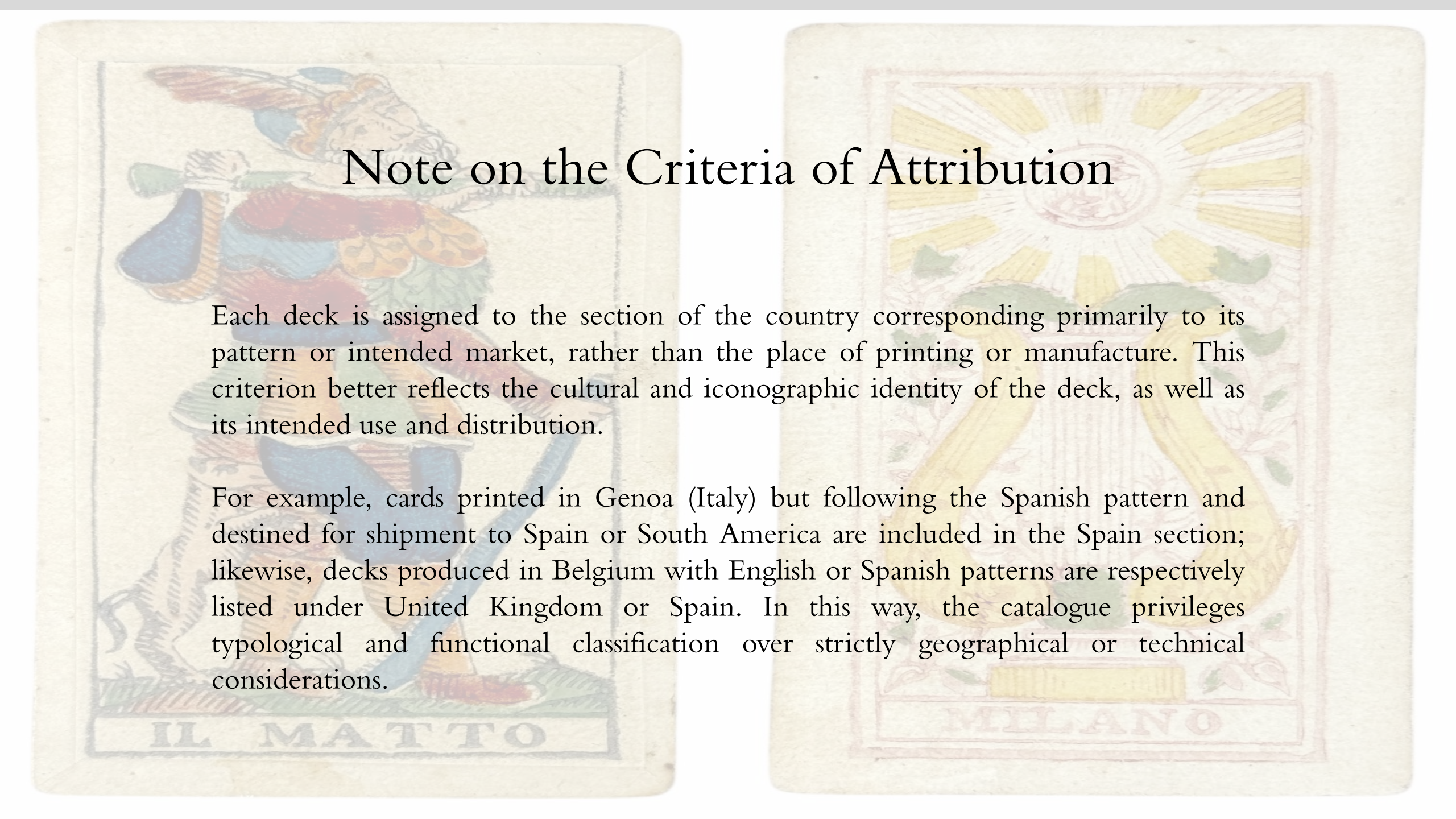
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Note on the Criteria of Attribution

Each deck is assigned to the section of the country corresponding primarily to its pattern or intended market, rather than the place of printing or manufacture. This criterion better reflects the cultural and iconographic identity of the deck, as well as its intended use and distribution.

For example, cards printed in Genoa (Italy) but following the Spanish pattern and destined for shipment to Spain or South America are included in the Spain section; likewise, decks produced in Belgium with English or Spanish patterns are respectively listed under United Kingdom or Spain. In this way, the catalogue privileges typological and functional classification over strictly geographical or technical considerations.

Italy

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1770

HUMOR AND ALLEGORY IN 18TH CENTURY:
THE EARLY «GAME OF THE CUCKOO» AND ITS BOLOGNESE ORIGINS

1. [GAME]. *Gioco del Cuccù*, Bologna, Al Leone – Francesco Berti, ca. 1770.

Complete deck of 38/38 cards plus one title card, printed from woodblocks on laminated card stock (95 × 55 mm). Each card consists of two thin printed papers glued over a thicker central core, with the verso sheet folded onto the recto margin by approximately 4 mm. Printing in clear, fine black lines, coloured through stencil (*pochoir*) with water-based pigments in bright red, yellow, and pale blue.

The reverse of each card is printed in clear black ink, occupying the full surface of the card and framed by a single incised line near the edge. The central image depicts a lion with wings, standing in heraldic pose on a plinth, the forepaws resting on an open book whose pages are rendered by a sequence of short diagonal hatchings. Below the platform appears the typographic inscription “AL LEONE” in capital Roman letters, perfectly centred within a narrow rectangular border. This emblem served as both printer’s mark and brand of the Berti workshop in Bologna. The printing quality is sharp, with regular alignment of borders and distinct engraving details.

€ 3.000

The deck is composed of nineteen unique designs printed twice, for a total of thirty-eight gaming cards, plus a separate title card. The structure reflects the classical Bologna *Cuccù* pattern attested by surviving examples in the Raccolta Bertarelli (Milan) and described by Pratesi and Smith in *The Playing-Card* (1990–91).

The numbered sequence comprises eleven numeral cards marked with Roman numerals I through X, plus a “Nulla” card symbolising zero. These are followed by eight special figures which provide the comic and narrative framework of the game: *Matto*, *Mascherone*, *Secchia*, *Osteria*, *Gatto*, *Cavallo*, *Bragon*, and *Cucco*.

The title card bears the inscription *In Bologna, all’ Insegna dell’Aquila*, echoing the imagery of the card backs and confirming the Berti workshop’s combined symbolic use of the eagle and lion. This unity of text and image reflects a sophisticated commercial branding uncommon in other Italian cardmakers of the period.

The absence of the two additional “Leone” cards introduced in the early nineteenth century for fiscal and decorative reasons situates this deck in the earlier Bolognese tradition, approximately between 1765 and 1780.



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The *Gioco del Cuccù* occupies a unique position in the European history of playing cards. Emerging in Bologna in the early eighteenth century, it descends from the older *Gnav* or *Asinello* family of games, characterised by humorous imagery and paired duplication rather than suits. The game spread rapidly across Italy and Northern Europe, giving rise to related forms such as *Cucu*, *Kille*, and *Hexenspiel*.

Within Bologna, the *Cuccù* reflects both the city's printing culture and its popular theatre. The comical figures and vernacular mottos belong to the same visual world as street performances, carnival satire, and moral allegories of everyday life. The workshop *Al Leone*, active under Papal rule, combined local humour with technical sophistication, producing decks that were both functional and visually engaging.

FRANCESCO BERTI, was a cardmaker and printer active in Bologna between approximately 1765 and 1780. His workshop operated under the sign *Al Leone* ("At the Lion"), located within the Papal Legation of Bologna. Archival sources record his activity among the registered *Cartai* of the *Arte della Carta* guild. Berti's production included both standard suit decks (*Primiera*, *Tarocchi*) and special packs such as *Cuccù*. Surviving examples, among them a *Primiera* deck at the Fondazione Carisbo and a *Cuccù* deck in the Raccolta Bertarelli, attest to his refined woodcut technique and characteristic back mark of an eagle carrying a youth over the inscription *AL LEONE*. His work illustrates the high level of craftsmanship achieved by Bolognese makers before the Napoleonic reforms, bridging artisanal tradition and pre-industrial printing methods.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Leinfelden: 1990, p. 45; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of Playing Cards*, Dover Publications: New York, 2021, p. 244; A. G. SMITH, *The 'Cambio' Packs and the Games played with Them: III. Cuccù, The Playing-Card*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1991: pp. 22–33; F. PRATESI, *Cards and Men for Cuccù, The Playing-Card*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1990, pp. 68–76; FONDAZIONE CARISBO, *Mazzo di carte bolognesi Al Leone, XVIII sec.: descrizione tecnica del cartoncino, stampa e coloritura*, Bologna, digital.fondazioneclarisbo.it; RACCOLTA BERTARELLI, *Gioco del Chu-Chu (Cucco) – Al Leone, ca. 1750, Catalogo online Grafiche in comune*, Collezione Crippa; 7bellonline.it, *I mazzi standard – Cuccù*, pattern description and historical notes.



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1780–1806

SYMBOLS OF VIRTUE AND ZODIAC: «EARLIER MINCHIATE FIORENTINE PATTERN»
IN THE AGE OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF TUSCANY AND THE «ETRURIA KINGDOM»

2. [MINCHIATE FIORENTINE]. Early *Minchiate Fiorentina*. Florence, Giovan Battista Agostini, ca. 1780–1806.

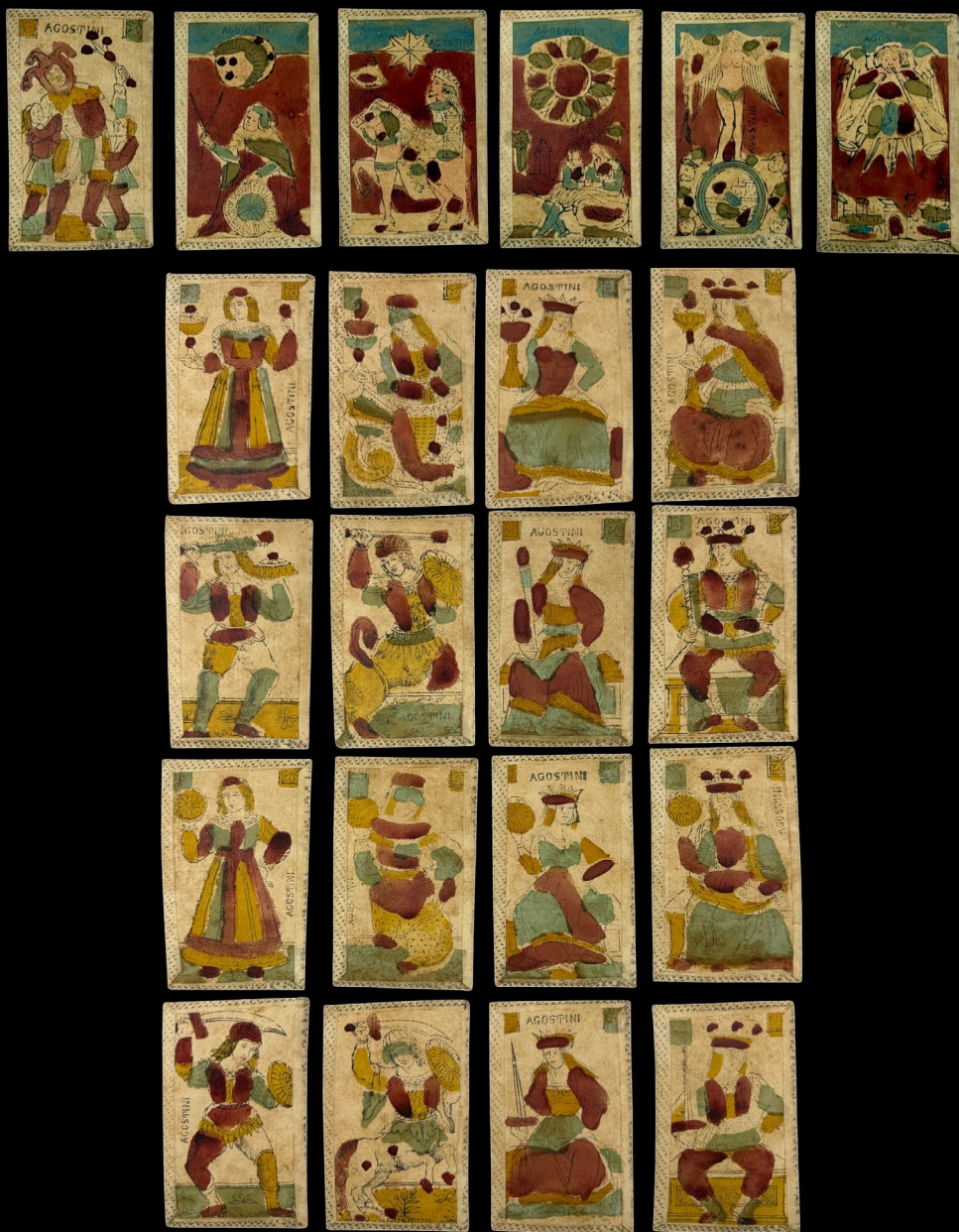
97/97 cards (100 × 60 mm), printed from engraved woodblocks and hand-coloured by stencil (*à pochoir*). The deck comprises 56 suit cards divided into the four traditional Italian suits, Swords (*Spade*), Batons (*Bastoni*), Cups (*Coppe*), and Coins (*Denari*), each composed of ten numeral cards (1–10) and four court cards (King, Queen, Knight, and Knave). The trumps (*Trionfi*) number thirty-five, bearing Roman numerals I–XXXV in scrolls at the top margin, accompanied by five additional unnumbered subjects, representing the four Elements and Prudence, plus the Fool (*Il Matto*), also unnumbered, thus reaching the canonical 97 cards of the Florentine Minchiate sequence. Printing is single-sided, with black line impressions delicately outlined and infilled with opaque water-based pigments applied by stencil, in red, blue, green, and yellow tones. The verso bears the distinctive *Traveller* figure accompanied by the word *ETRURIA*, printed in sepia-brown, folded slightly onto the recto (about 2 mm), with a dotted edge typical of late eighteenth-century Florentine production.

€ 12.000

THIS FINE AND COMPLETE MINCHIATE FIORENTINE DECK, printed by Giovan Battista Agostini in Florence around 1780–1803, exemplifies the Earlier Minchiate pattern (IPCS *Pattern Sheet 28*), one of the most enduring and elaborate Italian tarot traditions.

Agostini's imprint “ETRURIA” on the verso identifies it as part of the Florentine manufacture active under the short-lived Kingdom of Etruria (1801–1807). The deck stands as one of the last examples of popular woodcut printing in Tuscany before industrial lithography replaced the pochoir method. Characterised by fine black outlines, vibrant colour application, and a balanced arrangement of figures and symbols, this deck provides a remarkable testimony to the late eighteenth-century Florentine cardmaking tradition.

The 41 trumps iconography derives from sixteenth-century prototypes but displays eighteenth-century stylisation in linework and costume. The series begins with *Il Matto* (“The Fool”), unnumbered, followed by I–XXXV comprising allegorical, theological, and cosmological figures. The high trumps incorporate the Zodiac, the Four Elements, and the four Cardinal Virtues, rendered with expressive gestures and ample draperies. The unnumbered *Arie* (Elements and Prudence) are positioned after the numbered trumps, maintaining the canonical order documented in Florentine practice. The suit cards retain the typical “earlier” Florentine design: elongated swords and batons forming interlaced patterns, solid-coloured cups with floral ornamentation, and coin cards decorated with radiating motifs. Court cards are single-ended, showing Kings enthroned, Queens standing, Knights on horseback, and Knaves in profile.



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The *Fanti* (“Knives”) are especially notable: in Agostini’s version, as in other late-eighteenth-century Florentine decks, they appear as hybrid beings, half human, half animal, symbolising the fusion of instinct and intellect, strength and reason, that characterises the allegorical spirit of the game.

The *Regno d'Etruria* (“The Kingdom of Etruria”), established in 1801 under Napoleonic auspices, briefly replaced the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. It was ruled by the Bourbon dynasty of Parma, with its capital in Florence, and existed until its dissolution by Napoleon in 1807. The kingdom’s short duration, barely six years, makes all artefacts bearing the name *ETRURIA* exceptionally rare. Agostini’s use of this imprint on the backs of his cards thus situates the deck precisely within this fleeting historical context, between the fall of the Medici-Lorraine administration and the French imperial annexation. Printed objects marked *Etruria* symbolised a transitional identity, blending Tuscan pride with the emerging Napoleonic order.



CONDITIONS: The cards show slight curving due to age, yet remain in excellent preservation, with crisp impressions, well-preserved pigments, and no losses.

PROVENANCE: The verso of each card bears the imprint “ETRURIA”, accompanied by the figure of a traveller, a clear indication of Florentine manufacture under the short-lived Kingdom of Etruria. This marking alone securely anchors the deck’s origin in Tuscany and within the narrow chronological frame of ca. 1780–1806.

REFERENCES: C. SCHREIBER, *Catalogue of the collection of playing cards bequeathed to the British Museum by Lady Charlotte Schreiber*, Italian, 53; C. SCHREIBER, *Playing Cards of Various Ages and Countries selected from the collection of Lady Charlotte Schreiber*, III, pl. 90; K. WOWK, *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, 214; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 227 – 231; S. R. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopaedia of Tarots*, Vol. II, pp. 257–267.

1795

FROM DAUPHINÉ TO GENOA:

TRANSITIONAL ICONOGRAPHY IN A WOODCUT DECK OF NORTHERN ITALY



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3. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Genovese/Piedmontese Pattern*. Italy, Liguria or Piedmont: ca. 1795.

40/40 playing cards (85 × 55 mm), woodcut with stencil-applied colours in red, yellow, black, and greenish blue; French suits (hearts, diamonds, clubs, spades), square corners; versos printed with a repeating “chicken-feet” (arrow-shaped) pattern in dark grey ink. Genoese–Piedmontese pattern (derivative of the French Paris pattern, IPCS type not yet formally numbered), regional Ligurian–Piedmontese variant, without indices or captions. Printed borders framing the images. The deck was erroneously assembled *ab origine*, containing two copies of the Three of Hearts and lacking the Two of Hearts; it therefore comprises the full complement of forty cards, albeit with this anomaly.

€ 1.100

The deck is complete in its forty-card form, comprising the values Ace to 7 in each suit, plus the three court figures (King, Queen, Jack). The numeral cards display symmetrically arranged pips without indices, conforming to the French convention. The Aces are unadorned except for the central emblem. The court cards are full-length, in Baroque costume, derived from the French and Belgian models. The palette diverges from the canonical red–yellow–blue of the Paris pattern, substituting green for the French blue, a chromatic variant consistently attested in Ligurian–Piedmontese productions. The backs are uniformly decorated with a repeated small arrow-shaped design in grey ink (“chicken feet”), a typical device used to obscure the translucency of handmade paper. Such monochrome geometric backs were standard in Italian production of the late eighteenth century.

The introduction of French-suited cards into northern Italy dates to the late seventeenth century, when the House of Savoy imposed the Dauphiné Pattern within its territories (1698). From that foundation evolved the regional Piedmontese and Genoese styles, which by the mid-eighteenth century had become firmly established.

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

REFERENCES: W. G. 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: Hachette, 1906; The International Playing-Card Society website.



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1820

19TH CENTURY HAND-PAINTED DECK OF "MINCHIATE FIORENTINE"
A GAME DERIVED FROM TAROT AND ORIGINATING
IN FLORENCE IN THE 16TH CENTURY

4. [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 Encyclopaedia 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 selected from the collection of Lady Charlotte Schreiber*, III, pl. 90; K. WOWK, *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

AN EXTREMELY RARE COMPLETE HAND-PAINTED DECK OF ITALIAN TAROT BY FERDINANDO GUMPPENBERG, THE MOST CELEBRATED TAROT AND PLAYING-CARD MAKER IN ITALY AND FOUNDER OF THE RENOWNED «FABBRICA DI MILANO»

5. [TAROT]. *Early Tarot Deck Italian Pattern 3*. Milan (Italy): Ferdinando Gumppenberg, 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.

€ 9.000

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 Gumppenberg.

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 Gumppenberg, a German printer from Munich who introduced advanced engraving methods and a refined neoclassical aesthetic that transformed Italian card production.

Under Gumppenberg’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, Gumppenberg 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, Gumppenberg’s legacy was continued by Lattanzio Lamperti (see Lot 9) and, briefly, Teodoro Dotti (see lot 6), 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 colours application, 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-1840s 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. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot Volume II*, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, p. 221, 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. The International Playing-Card Society website.

1842

A COMPLETE HAND-PAINTED DECK OF ITALIAN TAROT
BELONGING TO IPCS PATTERN 3 BY TEODORO DOTTI,
MEMBER OF THE PARTNERSHIP KNOWN AS «FABBRICA DI MILANO»



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6. [TAROT]. *Early Tarot deck*. Milan (Italy), 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 IPCSPattern 3. To date, no comprehensive title has been established for this particular pattern. The deck was produced under the aegis of the Milanese cardmakers' consortium known as *Fabbrica di Milano* by its founder, Ferdinando Gumpenberg.

The deck was produced under the aegis of the Milanese cardmakers' consortium known as *Fabbrica di Milano*.

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 Gumpenberg, a Munich-trained printer who introduced German engraving precision, advanced colour techniques, and a refined *Mitteleuropean* aesthetic that redefined Italian cardmaking.

Under Gumpenberg'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, Gumpenberg 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 Gumpenberg'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 Gumpenberg'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 1838-1860 ca.) 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 complete tarot deck was most likely issued in the late 1840s or early 1850s. 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*^o (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. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot Volume 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. The International Playing-Card Society website.

ITALIAN TAROT BELONGING TO «EARLY PIEDMONTESE TAROT PATTERN 30»
AN ICONOGRAPHIC LEGACY OF THE «TAROT DE MARSEILLE»

78/78 tarot cards (111 x 62 mm), stencil-coloured xylographs; backs decorated with blue geometric patterns. The inscription *Oletti in Torino* appears on the Ace of Swords, *Oletti Torino* on the Ace of Cups, *Fabbrica Oletti, Contrada delle 4 Pietre, Torino* on the Two of Cups, and *Inciso dal Fabbicante – Contrada delle 4^o Pietre* on the Two of Coins. The Ace of Batons bears the legend *Oletti Torino*. Rounded corners. Trumps are numbered with Arabic numerals at the upper left corner and bear Italian captions. The Two of Swords features a different back, suggesting it may originate from another deck.

This deck belongs to the *Early Piedmontese Tarot*, classified as *IPCS Pattern 30 (IT 1.2)*, a regional evolution of the *Tarot de Marseille* tradition. Originating in the early eighteenth century as a Lyonnais export type, exemplified by the editions of Jean Dodal (1701–1715), it initially displayed French inscriptions and inherited several distinctive traits: the Devil (Trump XV) with a face on the torso, the Fool titled *Le Fol* rather than *Le Mat*, and a formal symmetry typical of the Marseille canon. As the pattern spread through Piedmont around 1735, inscriptions were Italianized, and a local iconographic vocabulary began to emerge. The Chariot (VII) adopted high, wheel-like supports; Justice (VIII) appeared winged or seated upon a throne with wing-like ornaments; the Hermit (VIII) was rendered cloaked and hooded; and the lightning in the Tower (XVI) issued from a quartered celestial disk. The Magician, labelled *Il Ciabattino* or *Bagatto*, held a wand; the Jacks lost their captions and appeared in tailored jackets. This wide-format deck, printed without turned-over edges, remained in production throughout Piedmont and the County of Nice until about 1870. It would later influence subsequent regional designs, including Patterns *IT 1.21* and *IT 1.211*, while preserving the distinctive local flavor and transitional features that bridge the French and Italian tarot tradition.

PROVENANCE: The absence of a fiscal stamp suggests that the deck originated from a private or unofficial print run, or possibly from an unsold production batch that never entered the market.

REFERENCES: S. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot Volume II*, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 233. 377; K. WOWN. *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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1862

AN EXTREMELY RARE PATRIOTIC DECK FROM THE DAWN OF ITALY:
A.G.C.R.'S DECK WITH "VIVA L'ITALIA LIBERA – SETT. 1862" STAMP

A RARE EARLY EXAMPLE OF ITALIAN UNIFICATION ICONOGRAPHY

8. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Italian deck «Piacentino Pattern»*. Piacenza (?): 1862.

40/40 cards (90 × 50 mm), hand-coloured lithography; blue ornamental back. Original patriotic tax stamp *VIVA L'ITALIA LIBERA – SETT. 1862* and publisher's mark *Fabbrica perfezionata di A.G.C.R* on the Ace of Coins.

€ 1.900

This deck follows the traditional Italian *Piacentino Pattern*, used in the reduced forty-card packs common to regional games. Each of the four suits, Coins, Cups, Swords, and Clubs, comprises seven pip cards (1 through 7) and three court cards: *Fante* (Page), *Cavallo* (Knight), and *Re* (King). The Queen is absent, as is typical of many Italian regional patterns of the period. The *Piacentino* type is distinguished by the particular attributes of its court figures: the King of Coins holds an axe, while the King of Cups bears a scepter. This iconographic detail diverges from that of related regional variants, the *Romagnolo* pattern, in which both Kings hold axes, and the *Viterbese*, where both wield scepters, thus affirming the individuality of the *Piacentine* design. The Ace of Coins carries an exceptionally rare patriotic fiscal mark introduced immediately after the unification of Italy: Mercury seated with caduceus, encircled by the legend *VIVA L'ITALIA LIBERA – SETT. 1862*. The inscription *CEN. 00* denotes its commemorative nature rather than an active fiscal purpose. Such early examples of patriotic imagery on playing cards are of particular historical and symbolic significance, reflecting the fervor of Italy's national unification and the emergence of a shared civic identity.



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This wording, appearing in place of the definitive *REGNO D'ITALIA – LEGGE 21 SET. 1862*, is found only on a limited number of trial matrices engraved between October and December 1862, preceding the official release of the government die by the *Officina Carte-Valori* of Turin. These provisional stamps were prepared by private printing houses, particularly in Turin, Genoa, and Florence, to allow the continuation of commercial production while awaiting the official issue.

ITS ICONOGRAPHY, DEPICTING THE FULL SEATED FIGURE OF MERCURY RATHER THAN MERELY HIS HEAD AS IN LATER VERSIONS, AND ITS PATRIOTIC MOTTO, ELOQUENTLY REFLECT BOTH THE IDEOLOGICAL FERVOR AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASPIRATIONS OF THE NEWLY UNIFIED KINGDOM. THESE PRELIMINARY DIES WERE RAPIDLY REPLACED BY THE STANDARDIZED SERIES; THEIR APPEARANCE ON SURVIVING DECKS THEREFORE REPRESENTS A RARE AND HISTORICALLY CHARGED WITNESS TO ITALY'S TRANSFORMATION FROM A CONSTELLATION OF STATES INTO A CENTRALIZED MONARCHY.

The cards were produced by the *Fabbrica perfezionata di A.G.C.R.*, a post-unification enterprise probably based in Central Italy and active in the early 1860s. The term "*Fabbrica perfezionata*" indicates the adoption of improved manufacturing techniques, likely combining industrial lithography with hand-finishing, an approach consistent with the broader national effort to replace artisanal regional production with standardized industrial methods, while still preserving distinct local iconographies.

Although the firm is absent from standard repertories of Italian cardmakers, the presence of this experimental fiscal stamp strongly suggests that *A.G.C.R.* operated as a trial manufacturer, possibly in direct collaboration with the nascent Ministry of Finance, to implement the earliest provisions of the unified Italian playing-card tax law.

CONDITIONS: Complete and perfectly preserved deck.

PROVENANCE: Stamp "VIVA L'ITALIA LIBERA – SETT. 1862" on the Ace of Coins.

REFERENCES: S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, London: 1990, nos. 49-50; Legge 21 settembre 1862, n. 965: *Istituzione della tassa di bollo sulle carte da giuoco*; Legge 8 giugno 1874, n. 1936: *Modifica del contrassegno fiscale*; R.D. 2 novembre 1882, no. 1080: *Centralizzazione della bollatura presso l'Officina governativa*.



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1863

A COMPLETE HAND-PAINTED DECK OF ITALIAN TAROT IPCS PATTERN 3
BY LATTANZIO LAMPERTI, SON-IN-LAW OF GUMPPENBERG AND DIRECTOR
OF «FABBRICA DI MILANO» UPON HIS FATHER-IN-LAW'S RETIREMENT

9. [TAROT]. *Early Tarot deck*. Milan (Italy): 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 colours 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 in the early 1860s, 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 in 1847, 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. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot Volume 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. The International Playing-Card Society website.

1879

A FLORENTINE VISION OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT
AT THE DAWN OF CHROMOLITHOGRAPHY

10. [GAME]. SMORTI, PIETRO. *Gioco della Fiera*. Florence: Stabilimento P. Smorti e C., 1879.

80/80 cards (95 × 60 mm) chromolithographed on sturdy card stock. The deck consists of two identical half-packs of 40 cards each, distinguished by their ornamental backs: one printed in deep red, the other in cobalt blue, both featuring a repeating floral pattern on a dotted ground. The fronts present vividly coloured lithographic illustrations depicting animals, fruits, trades, musical instruments, and domestic scenes, each accompanied by a short Italian caption (e.g., *Rosa, Asino, Pera, Gallina*). The title card, inscribed *Gioco della Fiera edito dallo Stabilimento P. Smorti e C. – Firenze 1879*, bears the note *Depositato per la Priorità*, attesting to the legal deposit and copyright protection customary for late nineteenth-century Italian printed games.

€ 1.000

The *Mercante in Fiera* game originated from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century lottery traditions and became a staple of Italian domestic entertainment. Smorti's 1879 edition preserves the rustic and didactic spirit of pre-industrial Florence, illustrating the persistence of popular iconography on the threshold of modern chromolithographic production. Its imagery derives less from contemporary fine-art models than from the vernacular visual language of *libri da fiera* (chapbooks and fairground prints), thus embodying the final phase of artisanal, narrative-based design before the rise of the mass-printed "Liberty" style.

The title *Gioco della Fiera* ("The Fairground Game") itself evokes the lively atmosphere of Tuscan *fiere* and *giostre*, where merchants, storytellers, and entertainers animated the crowd with lotteries, riddles, and moral tales. In this respect, Smorti's edition represents both a celebration and a nostalgic preservation of Italy's popular visual heritage at a moment of rapid industrial and cultural change.

As such, the *Gioco della Fiera* marks a pivotal point in the evolution of Italian pictorial playing cards, belonging to a transitional era when regional workshops like Smorti's began producing standardized chromolithographed decks for the urban bourgeoisie, bridging the worlds of traditional fairground imagery and the nascent commercial mass market of the early twentieth century.

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

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.



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1881

FLORENTINE ELEGANCE IN MINIATURE

11. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Florentine pattern*. Florence: Fabbrica Brogi, 1881.

40/40 cards (96 × 56 mm), lithographically printed and stencil-coloured in bright flat tones of red, yellow, blue, and green. French suits (♠ ♥ ♦ ♣). Court figures (King, Queen, Jack) single-headed, without corner indices. Backs printed with a repeating red floral motif on a cream ground, typical of late nineteenth-century Tuscan production.

€ 900

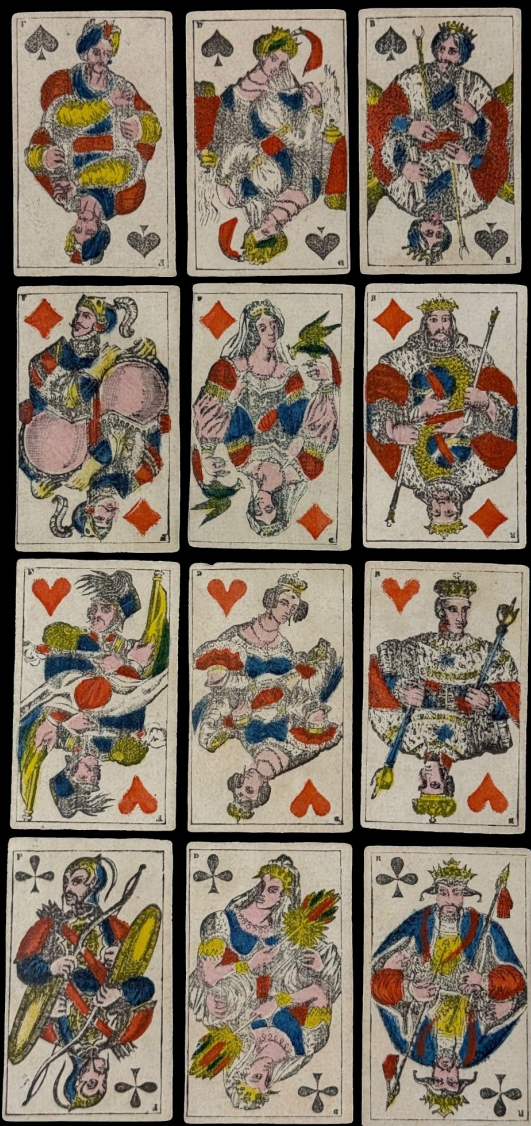
This deck belongs to the *Florentine Pattern*, characterized by its upright single-figure courts, preserving the vertical dignity of early nineteenth-century models. The Kings wear ample cloaks and hold a scepter or scroll; the Queens are depicted in richly draped Renaissance gowns; and the Jacks appear as youthful pages or soldiers. The engraving maintains a fine, supple line beneath the vivid stencil colouring, an aesthetic hallmark of Florentine workshops, which favoured a painterly approach over the schematic stylisation adopted elsewhere. Compared with later regional reinterpretations, such as Murari (Lot 18) or Modiano (Lot 20), this Brogi edition exemplifies an earlier, artisanal phase preceding industrial mechanization. The combination of a refined lithographic base and hand-applied stencils situates this pack among the final Florentine productions before the rise of nationally consolidated manufacturers in the 1890s.

The *Fabbrica Brogi* of Florence was active during the second half of the nineteenth century, specializing in playing cards, devotional prints, and chromolithographic works. It succeeded the long Tuscan lineage of cardmakers that included Cocci & C., Filippi, and Masini, blending traditional engraving craftsmanship with the early innovations of lithography. Archival records cite Brogi from the 1870s in the fiscal registers of the *Direzione Generale del Bollo* for Florence. His output remained primarily regional, catering to the Tuscan and Romagnolo markets. Though less industrially prominent than northern firms, Brogi's workshop embodied the enduring local graphic sensibility rooted in Florence's artistic tradition. The dated fiscal mark of 1881 on this deck makes it one of the earliest documented examples from his press, and a key witness to the transition from artisanal to mechanised Italian card production.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: The Ace of Hearts bears three official marks: the tax stamp of the *Regno d'Italia Centesimi 30*, head of Mercury facing left; the date stamp *28 FEB. 81* within the circular fiscal mark of the *Ufficio del Bollo, Firenze*; and the oval blue stamp *Fabbrica Brogi, Firenze* identifying the printer.

REFERENCES: K. Wowk, *Playing cards of the World*, Lutterworth, 1983: p. 26.



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1882

FROM B. DONDORF TO THE SAVOY:
MONTAUDO'S RARE ORIENTAL DECK «ORIENTALISCHES BILD»

12. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Italian Deck*. Turin: Giovanni Montaudò, 17 May 1882.

52/52 cards (85 x 52 mm), stencil-coloured lithographic playing cards on thick contemporaneous stock, unvarnished; French suits; standard values Ace–10 plus *Fante* [F], *Donna* [D], *Re* [R] for each suit. Double-ended, full-figure courts in exotic military attire, featuring turbans, shields, drums, bows and arrows, parrots, censers, and other Orientalist motifs. The design follows B. Dondorf's celebrated *Orientalisches Bild* pattern (Frankfurt, no. 212, ca. 1878) but adapted for the Italian market with Italian indices (F–D–R) and without the Dondorf name on the Jack of Clubs, backs decorated with an intricate blue floral pattern.

€ 700

This deck represents a remarkable Italian adaptation of the German *Orientalist* luxury playing-card style that flourished in the Rhine region, particularly through the presses of B. Dondorf and Prantl, during the 1870s. Montaudò, active in Turin during the early years of the Savoy monarchy, reinterpreted Dondorf's design for the domestic market, Italianizing the indices and imprinting his own fiscal stamp, thus creating a rare hybrid between continental iconography and national manufacture.

The imagery situates the deck firmly within the *fin-de-siècle* fascination for the exotic and the imperial. Ottoman warriors, Mamluk drummers, turbaned kings, and ladies with tropical birds all echo the Orientalist sensibility that swept through European art after the 1878 Exposition Universelle. Montaudò's version, however, is printed on unvarnished Italian stock with hand-applied stenciling, reflecting both local craftsmanship and cosmopolitan taste

CONDITIONS: Nine of Diamonds with a small corner loss (not affecting the pips); overall a very good copy.

PROVENANCE: Ace of Hearts bearing central fiscal stamp of the Kingdom of Italy “Centesimi 30” (tariff 1874–1887); stamp of the “Ufficio del Bollo, Turin”, dated “17 MAG 82”; surrounding legend: “Giovanni Montaudò ▪ Via Bertola n. 8, p. 2”.

REFERENCES: K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983; F. A. FOURNIER, *Los Naipes*, Museo Fournier, Vitoria, 1882; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966; S. MANN, *All cards on the table*, Verlag, 1980.

1884

HAND-PAINTED DECK OF ITALIAN TAROT IPCS PATTERN 3
BY COLOMBO E&C, SUCCESSORS TO EDOARDO DOTTI

13. [TAROT]. *Early Tarot deck*. Milan (Italy): Colombo E. & C. (successori di Edoardo Dotti), 1884.

78/78 cards (111 × 56 mm), hand-painted woodcuts; backs decorated with blue geometric pattern; rounded corners.

€ 4.000

A COMPLETE EARLY ITALIAN TAROT DECK, with the traditional Italian suits, *Spade* (Swords), *Bastoni* (Batons), *Coppe* (Cups), and *Denari* (Coins), with *Spade* and *Bastoni* interlaced in the characteristic manner of northern Italian production. The court cards are single-ended, comprising four figures per suit: King, Queen, Knight, and Valet, together with ten numeral cards in each suit, for a total of fifty-six suit cards. The trumps consist of twenty-one single-ended *atouts* numbered from I to XXI, plus the unnumbered *Il Matto* (The Fool). The Ace of Coins bears the maker's imprint "*Colombo Successore Edoardo Dotti – Milano.*"

The pattern of this deck, originally catalogued as *IT-1.1*, is now classified as *IPCS Pattern 3*. No comprehensive title has yet been established for this specific lineage of Milanese tarot design, which traces its origin to the *Tarocco Soprafino* tradition.

EDOARDO DOTTI, active in Milan from the mid- to late nineteenth century, was a distinguished Italian printer and publisher who played a pivotal role in the evolution of tarot manufacture. Having succeeded his father Teodoro Dotti around 1860, Edoardo continued the family's enterprise with a focus on artistic refinement and technical precision. His work drew heavily upon the *Tarocco Soprafino*, engraved by Carlo Della Rocca and first printed by Ferdinando Gumpfenberg circa 1835.

Dotti's editions preserved the intricate detailing of Della Rocca's model while introducing subtle iconographic updates reflecting Italy's new national identity. The imperial eagle was removed from the Empress's shield, and the Ace of Coins was redesigned to accommodate the fiscal marks required by the Kingdom of Italy following unification in 1861. Among his most accomplished productions was the *Milanese Tarot* (ca. 1862), a refined 78-card deck that perpetuated the high artistic standards of Lombard craftsmanship.

Following Edoardo's death, the firm passed to Colombo E. & C., who continued production in the same premises, maintaining both the aesthetic and typographic legacy of the Dotti family. The present 1884 edition, bearing Colombo's name, represents the last chapter of the *Fabbrica Dotti* tradition, faithful to the *Soprafino* lineage in both composition and palette, yet signaling the transition toward the industrial era of Italian cardmaking.

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After 1882, the Dotti firm ceased operations under its original name. By 1883–1884, Milanese tarot decks were already being issued under the imprint of Francesco Colombo, designated as “*Successore di Edoardo Dotti.*”

Little is known of Colombo’s biography, yet his work clearly perpetuated the *Dotti* tradition. He continued to produce tarot decks in the same refined style, faithful to the *Soprafino* lineage, at least until the mid-1880s, thus preserving an unbroken thread of craftsmanship within the Milanese school.

Following Colombo’s tenure, tarot manufacture in Lombardy began a steady decline. During the final decades of the nineteenth century, the market for luxury hand-coloured decks contracted, giving way to cheaper industrial production and double-ended formats that better suited modern printing economies. The artistic center of Italian cardmaking shifted northward, to the Piedmontese workshops producing double-figure tarots, and eastward to the industrial powerhouse of Modiano in Trieste.

The Milanese tarots of Edoardo Dotti and his successors, including Colombo, thus endure as historical witnesses to a sophisticated typographic and pictorial art, a culmination of the *Fabbrica di Milano* heritage and a testament to the artisanal skill transmitted across generations before the full onset of industrial modernity.



CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: 1. Tax stamp *Regno d'Italia – Centesimi 50* on Ace of Coins. This is a stamp in use from 1883 to 1914. 2. Circular date stamp «UFFICIO DEL BOLLO STRA°. MILANO», dated 1884, cancelling the duty mark. The designation “Ufficio del Bollo Straordinario” is documented in state archives as a branch of the stamp duty administration in the principal cities of the *Regno d'Italia*.

REFERENCES: S. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot Volume 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. The International Playing-Card Society website.



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1890

THE «TRIESTINE PATTERN», IPCS 36

14. [PLAYING CARDS]. ARIODANTE MENGOTTI, *Italian Deck*. Trieste: Mengotti, 1890.

52/52 cards (111 x 56 mm), chromolithography on thick card stock, double-headed, numbered with Arabic numerals; Italian-style turnover edges. Suit cards bear their names on horizontal labels, and the aces feature humorous or ironic mottoes.

€ 700

A COMPLETE DECK IN THE «TRIESTINE PATTERN», whose lineage derives directly from the Venetian model, retaining its Italian characteristics despite the long Austrian occupation of Venice (1797–1866). In its early phase, Triestine production drew on other regional influences, replicating elements of the Lombard *Tarocco*, the *Wienerbild*, and the Venetian pattern itself. By around 1850, however, the *Triestine Pattern* had achieved a distinct identity, possibly originating from the workshop of G. B. Marcovich in Trieste.

While preserving the overall Venetian structure, the Triestine version introduced numerous innovations. Most notably, each court card bears a descriptive title on a central label, *Caval. di Spade*, *Fante di Coppe*, *Re di Danari*, etc., a feature absent from the Venetian prototypes. The court figures also became more stylised and formalised, and the severed head traditionally held by the Jack of Swords was eliminated.

This Mengotti edition exemplifies the mature Triestine style of the late nineteenth century, combining Italian iconographic conventions with the chromolithographic refinement characteristic of Trieste's cosmopolitan printing industry.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: The tax stamp known as *Kartenstempel*, so called from the inscription appearing along its upper edge, was commonly used on antique decks of playing cards throughout Austria and the territories of the former Austrian Empire. This fiscal mark certified that the deck had been legally produced and that all applicable taxes had been duly paid.

The particular type of stamp present on this deck corresponds to the issue employed between 1890 and 1920, during the late imperial and early post-imperial period. Its face value of 60 Heller identified it as the rate applied to “a deck of more than 36 cards, not lacquered, not washable” (Endebrock)

REFERENCES: K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 19-20; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 31-34, 52; S. MANN, *All Cards On The Table*, Leinfelden-Echterdingen and Marburg, 1990, no. 70.

The International Playing-Card Society website. P. ENDEBROCK, *Playing-card Pages* website.



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1894

THE TUSCAN TRADITION PRESERVED:
COCCHI'S EARLY DOUBLE-HEADED «CARTE FIORENTINE»

15. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Carte da gioco fiorentine*. Cocci & C., Florence: 1894.

40/40 cards, (96 × 50 mm), printed xylographic outlines, hand-coloured by stencil in red, green, yellow, and blue; double-ended figures; backs printed with a monochrome blue geometric “marbled” (*mosaïque marbré*) pattern. French suits (hearts, diamonds, clubs, spades); values Ace to 7, Jack, Queen, King. Pattern is *Carte Fiorentine (Toscane grandi)*, IPCS classification, derived from the Lorraine model. Sub-pattern is the Cocci's continuation of the Chiari drawings (ca. 1840).

€ 700

A complete deck representing the canonical *Fiorentine* or *Toscane grandi* pattern, easily identified by its double-headed courts, vivid stencil colouring, and allegorical iconography. The adoption of double-ended figures signals the late-nineteenth-century modernization of earlier single-figure designs, while the absence of indices reflects the traditional Italian regional format. The backs bear Cocci's characteristic lithographed blue “mosaic-marbled” motif, standard in his production of the 1890s. Tuscan playing cards belong to the family of French-suited regional decks introduced under the Lorraine Grand Dukes during the eighteenth century. Around 1840, Ferdinando Chiari re-engraved the figures, establishing a distinctly local *Fiorentine* iconography that, though rooted in the Lorraine model, diverged from the Paris and Piedmontese patterns through its graceful proportions and allegorical details. In Florence, Chiari's decks epitomized the persistence of Tuscan artisanal craftsmanship, blending French aesthetic order with regional symbolic nuance.

By the late nineteenth century, the hand-stencil method endured despite the growing spread of chromolithography, testifying both to a conservative pride in local tradition and to the enduring vitality of manual colours work. Cocci's continuation of Chiari's designs in 1893–94 thus stands as a poignant emblem of transition: the preservation of a regional visual canon within the newly unified Italy's system of industrial regulation and fiscal control.

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

PROVENANCE: Tax stamp “Regno d'Italia – Centesimi 30” with Mercury's head on Ace of Hearts, cancelled in 1894 with crowned datary stamp “Firenze”; oval ink stamp of the manufacturer “Fabbrica Cocci & C. Firenze”.

REFERENCES: S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Leeds: 1966, pp. 172–173; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, London: Arco Publications, 1966.



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1895

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

16. [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. 118–118; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards in 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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1895

CONTINUITY AND TRANSITION:
THE LAST FLOWERING OF THE LYONNAIS PATTERN IN LIGURIA

17. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Pattern Lionese/Genovese*. Genova: Faustino Solesio, 1895.

40/40 cards (90 × 56 mm), woodblock printing with stencil colouring in red, yellow, blue, and black. Backs with blue plaid lattice design on an ivory ground. *Genovese type pattern*, direct descendant of the Lyon pattern, IPCS classification Lyon Pattern, Ligurian sub-type. Figures full-length, displaying regional details such as the falcon on the King of Hearts and the St. George's cross on the Jack of Clubs. Traditional palette of stenciled colours.

€ 900

A complete Genoese deck exemplifying the final stage in the evolution of the Lyon-derived Italian regional pattern. This edition preserves full-length figures and archaic iconography at a time when most continental workshops had adopted the modern Belgian-Genovese double-headed style. The deck's fiscal history is particularly noteworthy: it bears a sale cancellation dated 18 December 1895 in Genoa, and a later fiscal adjustment stamp from 1914, attesting both to its commercial use and to the evolving tax regulations of post-Unification Italy. The Genoese type directly descends from the *Lyonnais Pattern* that spread across northern Italy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While most European cardmakers by the late nineteenth century had adopted the bifront court format, Solesio's adherence to the older full-length style reflects a conscious regional conservatism. This choice catered to local preferences, especially for Ligurian games such as *Cirulla*, traditionally played with forty French-suited cards, and to export markets still favoring pre-industrial iconography. The stencil technique, with its vivid yet limited colours range, typifies Italian popular playing-card production of the era, balancing artisanal tradition with restrained mechanization. Solesio's Genoese deck thus stands as one of the last witnesses of a typological continuum linking the French Lyonnais heritage to Italian regional craftsmanship.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: 1. Ace of Hearts with printed maker's device *Faustino Solesio – Genova, Via Canneto il Curto No. 44*, within laurel wreath. 2. Italian fiscal stamp of the *Regno d'Italia 30 centesimi*, allegorical bust of Minerva/Mercury, law of 21 Sept. 1862. 3. Cancellation *18 Dic 95 – Genova*. 4. Later purple fiscal adjustment mark under the law of 30 July 1914.

REFERENCES: S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, London: Arco, 1966; *Late Flowering of the Lyon Pattern*, The World of Playing Cards, 2015.



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1903
FROM TREVISO TO BARI:
A FLORENTINE PATTERN FROM THE SOUTH OF ITALY

18. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Florentine pattern*. Bari: Guglielmo Murari, 1903.

40/40 cards (100 × 68 mm) lithographically printed and stencil-coloured in vivid flat tones of red, yellow, green, and black. Cards with French suits; court figures (King, Queen, Jack), without corner indices. Backs printed in black on white with a geometric monochrome pattern, a typical device to conceal wear.

€ 800

This deck belongs to the *Florentine pattern* with French suits, identifiable by its elegant, single-figure courts, a conservative survival of the Tuscan tradition that resisted the widespread European adoption of double-headed designs. The iconography is solemn and vertically composed: Kings enthroned with crown and scepter or orb; Queens dressed in elaborate Renaissance costume; and Jacks wearing stylized military or civic attire.

Compared with the contemporary Piedmontese or Genoese packs, already double-headed by the late nineteenth century, this Florentine deck remains intentionally traditional. It epitomizes Murari's commercial strategy of issuing a distinct deck for each Italian region, thus supplying the entire national market. From his Bari workshop, Murari produced Neapolitan, Sicilian, Bolognese, Romagnole, Piedmontese, and Florentine decks, each adapted to local iconographies. The present Florentine deck, manufactured in Apulia for the Tuscan market, illustrates the breadth of Murari's enterprise. Around the turn of the century, while northern firms such as Modiano and Dal Negro dominated their respective regions, Murari succeeded in establishing Bari as a major centre of card production, exporting millions of packs annually throughout Italy and abroad.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: The Ace of Hearts bears three official marks: 1. The fiscal stamp of the Kingdom of Italy – 30 centesimi, depicting the effigy of Mercury; 2. A dated cancellation “9 LUG. 1903”; 3. A circular manufacturer's mark reading “Guglielmo Murari – Bari.”.

REFERENCES: A. ROMANAZZI, *Le carte da gioco baresi e la fabbrica Murari*, Bari: 2022; F. QUARTO, *Guglielmo Murari: l'imprenditore che portò le carte da gioco a Bari*, Bari-e.it, 26 February 2024; N. DE GIORGIO, *La Manifattura delle Carte da Gioco di G. Murari*, Veglie: 2005; C. CALÒ CARDUCCI, *Le carte baresi*, Bari: Adda, 1996; British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, *Murari decks, late 19th–early 20th century*.



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1903

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

19. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Neapolitan 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 Neapolitan regional pattern.

€ 700

Each suit follows the canonical Neapolitan iconography as codified in the Italian regional pattern sheets, IPCS *Neapolitan 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 (WOPC), "Neapolitan Pattern Playing Cards." Online article, 2018.



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1907

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

20. [CARD GAME]. BARELLI, NAPOLEONE PIETRO. *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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1911 THE «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESE»

21. [TAROT]. *Tarocchi Piemontesi*. Turin (Italy): Maggio e C°, 1911.

78/78 Tarot cards (108 x 60 mm), chromolithographically printed, backs decorated with geometric patterns in various shades of green; corners rounded.

€ 900

A COMPLETE DECK OF THE «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESE», featuring the traditional Italian suits, *Spade* (Swords), *Bastoni* (Batons), *Coppe* (Cups), and *Denari* (Coins), with the interlaced arrangement of Swords and Batons typical of the Piedmontese pattern. The pack comprises double-ended court cards (King, Queen, Knight, and Valet) and ten numeral cards in each suit, for a total of 56 suit cards, together with 21 double-ended trumps (*atouts*, *atutti* in Italian) numbered from I to XXI, and the additional card *Il Matto* (The Fool), numbered 0.

The trumps and court cards are captioned in Italian. Arabic numerals are used for the trumps and for the suits of Cups and Coins, while the suits of Swords and Batons employ Roman numerals. The Ace of Cups shows a chalice filled with flowers; the Fool depicts a figure confronted by a butterfly, differing from earlier versions in which the Fool is pursued by a wild beast. The Ace of Coins bears the maker's imprint: "*Maggio e C.o – Torino – deposito Via Palazzo di Città 2 – fabbrica Via S. Giobbe n. 2 bis e Via Fiocchetto 14.*"

Founded and active in Turin at the beginning of the twentieth century, Maggio & C. appears in repertories of Italian playing-card manufacturers from 1904 and continued in operation at least into the 1910s. The company maintained its commercial offices at *Via Palazzo di Città 2*, in the historic centre, while its workshops were located in *Via San Giobbe* and *Via Fiocchetto*, within the artisanal district of Borgo Dora, long associated with printing and small-scale manufacturing.

CONDITIONS: A used but well-preserved deck overall.

PROVENANCE: Duty stamp on Ace of Gold. These stamps were in use in Italy from 1883 to 1914. The text is "REGNO D'ITALIA", the value is "CENTESIMI 50". Note that Mercury is facing to the left now.

REFERENCES: S. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot* Volume 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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1911

ART NOUVEAU DECK, EMBLEM OF ITALIAN GAMING TRADITION
BY ONE OF ITALY'S MASTER CARD PRINTERS

22. [CARD GAME]. *Dilettevole Giuoco del Chuchu*. Bari: Guglielmo Murari, 1911.

40/40 cards (90 x 55 mm), chromolithographically printed illustrations; backs decorated with geometric motifs in varying shades of blue; corners rounded.

€ 700

The deck consists of forty cards, divided into two identical sets of twenty. The first set comprises the *numeral cards* (1–10), printed in pairs without illustrations, in a restrained typographic design. The second set, representing the *figure cards*, includes two copies of each of the following allegorical subjects, rendered in vivid Art Nouveau imagery: *Il Matto* (“The Fool”); *Il Leone* (“The Lion”), shown with a golden shield inscribed “*Dilettevole Giuoco del ChuChu*”; *Il Mascherone* (“The Mask”), numbered 00; *La Secchia* (“The Bucket”), numbered 000; *Il Nulla* (“The Nothing”), numbered 0000; *La Taverna* (“The Tavern”), numbered 11; *Lo Gnaf* (“The Cat,” also known as *Gnao* in other regional traditions), represented by a cat, numbered 12; *Il Salto* (“The Leap”), a horse in mid-jump, numbered 13; *Il Tuffo* (“The Dive,” or *Bragon* in some variants), depicting a thief or miscreant, numbered 14; and *Il Cucco* (“The Cuckoo”), numbered 15, shown as a brightly coloured bird.

On one of the two *Cucco* cards appears the printer’s imprint “*Guglielmo Murari, Milano 1911*” (a probable engraving reuse from another press location), while the other bears both the fiscal stamp and the Royal Demesne mark (“Regio Demanio”) of the Kingdom of Italy, certifying the lawful manufacture and taxation of the deck under contemporary gaming regulations.

The rules of play are simple yet entertaining: each player receives one card face down and may, in turn, choose to keep it or attempt to exchange it with that of the neighbour to the left, seeking to avoid the lowest-ranking card. Certain figure cards, such as *Il Matto*, *La Taverna*, or the dreaded *Il Nulla*, introduce exceptions, reversing exchanges or freezing play, adding unpredictability and humour to the game. When all cards are revealed, the holder of the lowest-ranking card loses the round, often facing playful or symbolic penalties.

CONDITIONS: Marks of use heavier on few cards; overall, a good deck.

PROVENANCE: 1. Duty stamp on *Cucu 15* card. This stamp was in use in Italy from 1883 to 1914. The text is *REGNO D'ITALIA*, the value is *CENTESIMI 30* and Mercury is facing to the left. 2. Circular tax stamp “timbro Regio Demanio”, certifying payment of the tax and authorization for sale or use. The date reads *9 September 1911*, indicating when the tax was paid and the deck was cleared for commercial distribution.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, p. 244; S. MANN, *All cards on the table*, LEINFELDEN, 1990, p. 45.



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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

23. [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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1916

THE «MATTO» FACING LEFT: A RARE VARIANT IN A «PIEDMONTESE TAROT»
BY FAUSTINO SOLESIO, BEARING THE 1917–22 «MONOPOLI SEAL»

24. [PLAYING CARDS]. *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 (1917–1922). 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. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot* Volume 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.

1916

ITALIAN «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESE» ICPS PATTERN SHEET 4

25. [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: Stuart Kaplan, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot Volume II*, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 387-390; KATHLEEN WOWK. *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 133-136; SYLVIA MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 31-34, 52.



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1924
THE «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESE»

26. [TAROT]. *Tarocchi Deck*, Turin (Italy): 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

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. 3 lire per pack for ordinary decks and 5 lire for luxury editions.

REFERENCES: S. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot* Volume 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.

1928

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

27. [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 (see lot 10) 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.



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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 uncolored 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. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot* Volume 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.*



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1933

ITALIAN «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESE» ICPS PATTERN SHEET 4

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

78/78 Tarots 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 PIEMONTESE», 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* ; these are stamps used from 1925 to 1943.
2. Date stamp *Mag. 1933*.

REFERENCES: S. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot Volume 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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1944-1945
ITALIAN TAROT «MODERN PIEMONTESE PATTERN» PRINTED IN GENOA
AND USED DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN THE «ITALIAN SOCIAL REPUBLIC»

30. [TAROT]. *Tarocchi Piemontesi*. Genoa (Italy): Faustino Solesio, 1944-1945.

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

€ 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. 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](#)

1944-45

ITALIAN «TAROCCHI PIEMONTESE» ICPS PATTERN SHEET 4
PRINTED IN ITALY DURING WORLD WAR II, IN THE ORIGINAL BOX

31. [TAROT]. *Tarocchi Piemontesi*. Bergamo (Italy): Masenghini di R. Lombardini, 1944-45 (sold in 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 “*Tarocco 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* to indicate that the deck was sold four years after the production, when the printing house Masenghini, that operated under the brand *Masenghini di R. Lombardini* from 1944 to 1945, was already closed.

REFERENCES: S. 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.

IPCS Pattern sheet page.



Click for wider description
and High Res images

1948
THE GAME OF TRIUMPHS: «MINCHIATE FIORENTINE» AND ITS 97 FIGURES :
A JOURNEY THROUGH SYMBOLS, VIRTUES AND THE ZODIAC
IN THE GENOESE EDITION BY FAUSTINO SOLESIO

32. [TAROT]. *Minchiate Fiorentine*. Genoa: Faustino Solesio, 1948.

97/97 cards [97 × 59 mm], chromolithographically printed. Cards with dotted borders imitating the folded margins of earlier packs, where the back design was printed and wrapped around the edges. Backs decorated with a blue and brown geometric pattern. The Ace of Coins bears the imprint “*Fabbrica di Carte da Giuoco Faustino Solesio – Genova – Casa fondata nel 1774*” and the dated cancellation “*Ott. 1948.*”

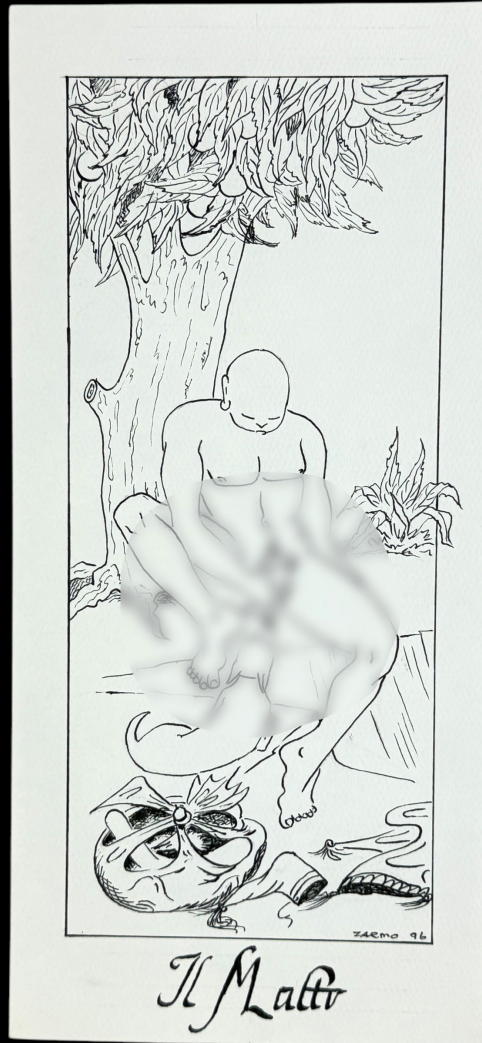
€ 3.200

Among the most ancient and visually captivating of Italian tarot decks, the *Minchiate Fiorentine* originated in Florence during the early sixteenth century. Unlike the standard 78-card tarot, the *Minchiate* includes an expanded system of allegories and symbols. Of all known European tarot variants, it contains the largest number of cards, 97 in total. In addition to most of the traditional 22 trumps, the *Minchiate* incorporates the twelve signs of the zodiac, the four cardinal virtues, and the four elements, creating an intricate symbolic cycle that reflects Renaissance cosmology. The first 35 trumps are numbered with Roman numerals, while the remaining six are unnumbered and unnamed. The initial four trumps, known as the *Papi*, were not individually differentiated until later editions. Following these, also unnumbered, are *The Star*, *The Moon*, *The Sun*, *The Angel*, *The World*, and *The Fool*. This Genoese edition, produced by Faustino Solesio, revives the Florentine iconographic sequence through precise chromolithography, combining traditional imagery with the refined printing style characteristic of Solesio’s mid-twentieth-century workshop.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved, as new.

PROVENANCE: 1. Tax stamp *Repubblica Italiana*, the value is *Lire Cento* on the ace of coins in use from 1948 to 1954. 2. Stamp *Ott.1948*.

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



[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

33. [TAROT]. ZARMO (PSEUD.). *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.

France

[Go back to Index page](#)

1650-1790

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

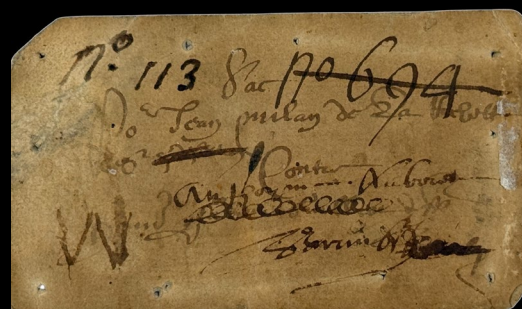
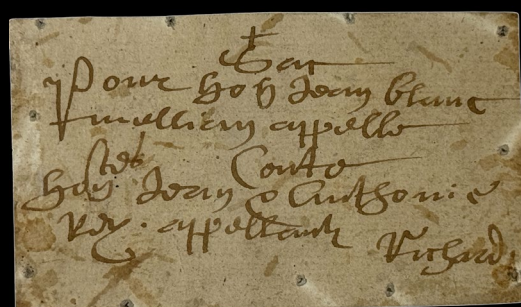
AN EXCEPTIONAL CORPUS FOR HISTORICAL, BIBLIOGRAPHICAL,
AND TYPOGRAPHICAL STUDIES, BETWEEN WRITING, MEMORY, AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

34. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Collection of French reused playing cards with contemporary manuscripts on various subject on the verso.* France: 1650-1790.

The collection comprises sixty-four French playing cards produced between circa 1650 and the late eighteenth century, subsequently repurposed on the verso as writing supports for documentary and administrative uses. A preliminary typological analysis of the patterns represented, Paris, Dauphiné, Provence, Bayeux, already highlights the remarkable scholarly value of the ensemble: the geographical and cultural variety of origin allows the mapping of regional manufacturing traditions and the stylistic evolution of French playing cards under the *Ancien Régime*.

€ 11.000

- *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 type. 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.



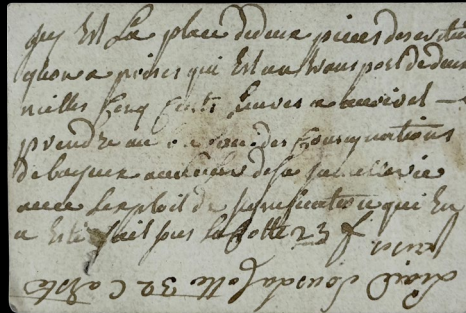
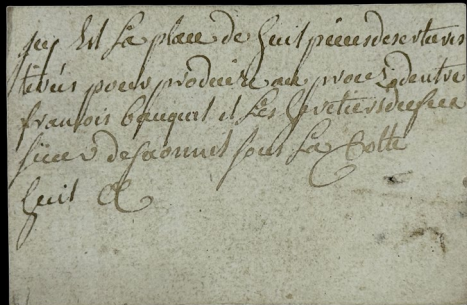
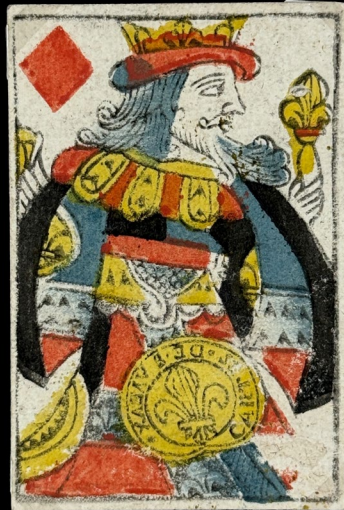
Dauphiné pattern, ca. 1650. The backs were used as labels sewn onto bags containing legal documents. The Jack card shows evidence of three separate reuses. Both cards retain rows of needle perforations along the edges, marks left from when they were stitched to the document bags.

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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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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.

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.



Est en poudre Vermifuge
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France

pâte pour les rats et souris :
 1/2 pinte de pain
 1/2 pinte de pain
 1/2 pinte de pain
 1/2 pinte de pain
 1/2 pinte de pain
 1/2 pinte de pain

Eau de la Reine d'Hongrie
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France

Cire liquide pour les bottes
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France
 1/2 pinte de Vin de France

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.

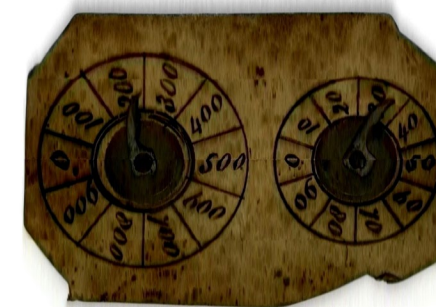
CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

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

[Recto and verso: playing cards in France before 1789 | Voltaire Foundation](#)
[Backs | French Playing Cards](#)



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.





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1739

A DIJON MASTERPIECE OF THE PARIS PATTERN

35. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Portrait de Paris*. Dijon: Jean-Baptiste Madénié, ca. 1739.

52/52 cards (88 × 58 mm), woodcut on laid paper, hand-coloured by stencil (*masquerage*), backs plain (white). Preserved with its original printed wrapper, folded from a single sheet, bearing the full imprint: *Cartes très fines de Jean Bte Madénie l'aîné, fabricant de Cartes et Cartons de toutes espèces, Rue Maison Rouge aux Armes de la Province de Bourgogne à Dijon*, ["Very fine cards by Jean Bte Madénie the elder, maker of cards and boards of all kinds, Rue Maison Rouge under the Arms of the Province of Burgundy, Dijon"].

€ 5.400

The wrapper displays a winged putto blowing a trumpet above a scroll inscribed *À la Renommée des Bonnes Cartes*, with the word *Entières* printed in the centre to indicate a complete pack. The cards conform to the *Portrait de Paris* ("Paris Pattern") as classified by the International Playing-Card Society (IPCS *Pattern Sheet PS 112*), depicting full-length court figures with names engraved in uppercase lettering.

The laid paper shows the fine, slightly irregular texture typical of early eighteenth-century handmade stock, with faint chain lines visible under angled light. The stencil colouring produces translucent washes of red, blue, yellow, and green, sometimes overlapping, an effect that reveals both the precision and the subtle irregularities of hand application.

The wrapper, printed in dense black ink, retains traces of the woodgrain of the block and slight breaks in the lettering, characteristic of repeated impressions. The harmonious relationship between paper tone, engraving, and colouring exemplifies the elegance of early Dijon production. Executed in four tones within sharply defined contours, the colouring heightens the engraved detail with remarkable balance and clarity.

No fiscal stamp is present, consistent with pre-1750 manufacture. The paper bears a watermark of a stylised fleur-de-lis, typical of French card papers from the early to mid-eighteenth century.

The deck comprises the four French suits, Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, and Spades, each running from Ace to King. All twelve court cards bear the canonical names of the Paris Pattern: *Alexandre, Argine, César, Rachel, David, Pallas, Charles, Judith, Hogier* and *La Hire*.



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Each figure is full-length, single-ended, and framed within a fine linear border. On the Knave of Clubs, the caption is misspelled *Hogire* (*sic*), instead of *Lancelot*, an error likely resulting from a block interchange with the Knave of Spades (*Ogier le Danois*) or a slip by the woodblock engraver. This constitutes a noteworthy variant for comparative study. The plain backs and the absence of corner indices confirm a pre-Revolutionary date. Colour registration is precise, and the paper's texture and thickness correspond closely to other Dijon productions. The wrapper's ornamented typography and promotional language exemplify an early form of branding within the provincial card trade.

JEAN BAPTISTE MADÉNIÉ active in Dijon between ca. 1735 and 1745, was almost certainly the son of Pierre Madénié, master cardmaker of the city since 1709. His work extended the family's renown beyond tarot manufacture to include standard French-suited decks, combining vigorous linework with the precise stencil colouring typical of Burgundian workshops that served both domestic and export markets.

The *Chronique des Cartiers de Dijon* documents his guild membership and the use of the designation *l'ainé* ("the elder"). His principal known productions include a Tarot de Marseille Type II (1739), preserved in the *Musée National Suisse*, Zurich, and cited by the International Playing-Card Society (*IPCS Pattern Sheet 002*). Madénié's contribution proved pivotal in the evolution of French-suited playing cards: the Dijon workshop's interpretation of the Paris Pattern helped codify the iconography that became the national standard. As observed by D'Allemagne and in IPCS studies, Madénié's decks represent some of the earliest coherent provincial realizations of the Paris model outside the capital. Complete examples from his press are exceedingly rare; specimens retaining their original wrappers, like the present one, are virtually unique among eighteenth-century French packs.



CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved; the original wrapper survives, slightly worn and with minor defects consistent with age.

REFERENCES: K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 74-76; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 62-64; J. L. LANEZ, *Chronique des Cartiers de Dijon entre 1680 et 1745*, Dijon: Archives de la Côte-d'Or, 2018. International Playing-Card Society. *Paris Pattern* (*IPCS Pattern Sheet PS 112*), 2018.

[Paris pattern — The World of Playing Cards](#)



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1765
FROM CAESAR TO JUDITH:
SEVEN LEGENDARY FIGURES ON PARIS PLAYING CARDS

36. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Jeu de cartes au Portrait de Paris*. Paris: Charles Ybert, ca. 1765.

Seven cards (85 × 55 mm), from a partial deck of the *Portrait de Paris* type, in the Ybert variant with the imprint *Ybert* at the foot and *G.D. Paris* (*Généralité de Paris*) on the Jack of Clubs, replacing the figure's name and serving as fiscal control. Woodblock printed and hand-stenciled in red, yellow ochre, and blue with black outlines. Versos plain white, bearing traces of printed letters, numerals, and punctuation; square corners.

€ 900

This fragment of seven cards, engraved and printed in Paris by Charles Ybert, forms part of a standard French-suited pack of the *Portrait de Paris* pattern, the official Parisian model established after the royal ordinance of 1701. The group preserves both the canonical iconography and the distinctive inscriptions that identify its maker and confirm fiscal compliance.

Dating to ca. 1765–1770, this fragment aligns with three converging criteria: Ybert's documented activity (1746–1772); the presence of the *G.D. Paris* fiscal mark, characteristic of mid-eighteenth-century taxation; and the orthographic forms (*Cezar*, *Judic*) together with stylistic features typical of the 1760s rather than later decades.

CHARLES YBERT, active in Paris between 1746 and 1772, was a *maître cartier* admitted to the Parisian guild in 1746. His workshops were successively located at *rue Neuve Saint-Merry*, *rue Saint-Martin* under the sign *Au cartier du Roi*, later *rue des Arcis* and *rue Montmartre*. In addition to playing cards, Ybert produced decorated papers and stationery, combining the trades of *cartier* and *papetier*. Although his documented activity ceases in the early 1770s, cards bearing his name continued in circulation, suggesting reuse of his printing blocks or matrices.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: H. R. D'ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIVe au XXe siècle*, Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1906; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, pp. 74–76; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing Cards*, London, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 62–67; S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Marburg, Verlag, 1990, no. 129; F. A. FOURNIER, *Los Naipes*, Vitoria, Museo Fournier, Heraclio Fournier S.A., 1982, no. 52.



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1795-1810

«TAROT DE BESANÇON», IPCS PATTERN SHEET 6:

A MASTERPIECE BY THE FOREMOST PRINTER OF THE TAROTS DE BESANÇON,
ONE OF THE LEADING FRENCH CARD MAKERS OF THE LATE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES,
CODIFIER OF THE STANDARD PATTERN OF THIS TAROT

37. [TAROT]. *Tarots de de Besançon*, Besançon: Jean Jacob Jerger, ca. 1795-1810.

78/78 cards (122 x 65 cm), woodcut prints hand-coloured by stencil; multilayered paper stock; backs printed with a fine pink-and-white diaper pattern; square corners. The Two of Cups bears the printer's imprint: *Tarots fins faits par J. Jerger, fabricant cartes à Besançon*. The inscription *France J. Jerger* is impressed on all Major Arcana and court figures, serving as the manufacturer's mark.

€ 5.500

The *Tarots de Besançon* represent a distinct historical variant of the traditional *Tarot de Marseille*, produced between the late eighteenth and early 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 playing-card manufacture and trade.



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 deliberate “secularization” of imagery may be understood as a pragmatic adaptation for transregional and cross-confessional markets. While papal imagery was well suited to Catholic France and Italy, it could appear inappropriate or contentious in Protestant or mixed regions. By replacing ecclesiastical authority with mythological personifications of wisdom (*Juno*) and power (*Jupiter*), the deck attained a universal iconographic language, broadening its appeal throughout Europe.



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and High Res images

Among the defining characteristics of this pattern:

- The Jack of Batons holds both hands below the top of the baton.
- Queens are depicted standing, rather than seated.
- The Ace of Cups presents a rounded cup with a lid, replacing the Gothic chalice typical of the Tarot de Marseille.
- The Devil wears furry trousers.
- The Moon card includes a fully modelled human face.
- The Fool is captioned *Le Fou* instead of *Le Mat*.

The Besançon Tarot emerged from the flourishing cardmaking traditions of eighteenth-century France, Switzerland, and Germany. While the *Tarot de Marseille* was already firmly established in Italy and France, the Besançon variant evolved within a multicultural and commercially dynamic context, shaped by cross-currents of French, German, and Swiss iconography. Besançon's geographical position at the crossroads of major trade routes enabled wide distribution of its production: from the Franche-Comté workshops, decks were exported throughout Switzerland, particularly the German-speaking cantons, and into southern Germany, establishing the Besançon type as the dominant Central European form of the tarot by the turn of the nineteenth century.





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and High Res images

JEAN JACOB JERGER was born in Kehl, Germany, on 7 July 1777. Trained as an engraver and card-maker in Alsace, a region with a strong tarot-making tradition since the 18th century, he relocated at the close of the French Revolutionary period to Besançon, in eastern France. There, at no. 74 Grande Rue, he established a workshop specialising in playing cards, particularly tarots. Jerger soon became the foremost tarot printer of Besançon and one of the leading figures in French cardmaking between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. His professional activity extended for over four decades, from circa 1795 until his retirement around 1845. He died in Besançon on 4 April 1860, aged 82.

Jerger's lasting reputation rests primarily on his definitive codification of the Tarot de Besançon. Although the type originated earlier in Strasbourg, where eighteenth-century engravers had already replaced the papal figures with the mythological deities Juno and Jupiter, it was Jerger who standardized and disseminated the pattern. While occasionally described as the “inventor” of the Besançon tarot, he is more accurately regarded as its canonical codifier.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Jerger had produced the version that became authoritative, fixing the iconographic and stylistic traits that would henceforth define the type universally known as the *Tarot de Jerger*.



CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

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 XIV au XX siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906; S. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Volume II, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 342, 358; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of The World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, p. 13. The International Playing-Card Society website.

1800

HAND-COLOURLED « JEU GROTESQUE » UNCUT DECK

38. [TRANSFORMATION CARDS]. *Léger de Main*, France: ca. 1800.

Complete uncut deck on a single sheet (660 x 500 mm), representing 32 hand-coloured woodcut playing cards (105 x 70 mm), preserved in a wooden frame with glass.

€ 3.200

During the early 19th century, a variety of non-standard packs was introduced in France, including those dedicated to music, costume, botany, and natural history.

Following this trend, humorous composers gave free rein to their imagination in the publication of *Jeux grotesques* or *Cartes à Rire*.

One of the most important and renowned *Cartes à Rire* decks is the one called *Léger-de-Main*.

The deck is a collection of two-sided drawings. The court cards are all vertically reversible, so that one sees a different picture at each orientation. The pip cards are caricatures of pairs of people joined at the back.

There are six different faces on the aces and court cards, with only two figures combined on the pip cards, their heads meeting in the centre to create the appearance of multiple faces pointing in various directions. The value of each card is indicated by a suit symbol in the corner.

The deck comprises 32 cards, forming a set for Piquet, a card game that uses only the Ace and Six through King of each suit.

This deck appears in the collection of the Museo Fournier, Spain.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 66; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, p. 71; F. A. FOURNIER, *Los Naipes*, Museo Fournier, Vitoria: Heraclio Fournier S.A., 1982, p. 141, no. 322; H. R. D'ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIV au XX siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906.



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1800

EARLY EDUCATIONAL CARD GAME
DESIGNED TO TEACH CHILDREN ROMAN HISTORY

39. [GAME-EDUCATIONAL CARDS]. JOUY, VICTOR JOSEPH ETIENNE DE. *Jeu de Cartes Historiques contenant un abrégé de L'histoire Romaine*. Lille: Vanackere, Paris: Latour, 1800.

€ 900

48/48 cards (117 x 77 mm), woodcut on thick paper, preserved in the original paper box, with printed title label on the lid and printers' names on a paper label inside the lower half of the box.

A rare and engaging educational deck devised to teach children the fundamentals of Roman history through play. Historical themes had inspired numerous instructive games, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Étienne de Jouy, in collaboration with the engraver Pierre-François Godard, created a remarkable series of didactic card sets. Between 1804 and 1820, sixteen such games were issued by Vanackere in Lille and distributed under his imprint, as well as through other publishers in Paris such as Latour and Renoir.

Each card presents a wood-engraved medallion portrait of an eminent Roman historical figure, with a brief biography filling the remainder of the card. The cards are numbered with Roman numerals (I–XLVIII) in the upper left corner; to the right of the medallion appears a concise description of the individual, while a longer biographical summary is engraved beneath. The medallions are clearly modelled on ancient coins or medals, underscoring the historical and numismatic accuracy of the series. The cards bear no suit signs, reflecting their purely educational function. Though intended for instruction, learning was achieved through the mechanics of gameplay. The rules are simple: the game follows a “war” format in which the highest card wins the trick. Players must, however, demonstrate knowledge of the figures on the cards they win; if unable to do so, the trick passes to the next player. For example, card XLVII (Livia), described as “a cunning woman who possessed none of the virtues of her sex”, defeats XXXVII (Crassus), “known only for his immense and shamefully acquired wealth.”

This deck is recorded in the collections of the Museo Fournier de Naipes (Vitoria, Spain).

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use; overall a good deck preserved in its original box.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, p. 66; F. A. FOURNIER, *Los Naipes*, Museo Fournier, Vitoria: Heraclio Fournier S.A., 1982, p. 139, no. 41.

1810

RARE PEDAGOGICAL PLAYING CARDS FOR MUSICAL INSTRUCTION,
COMBINING DIDACTIC TEXTS AND ENGRAVED NOTATION
FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH

40. [GAME-EDUCATIONAL CARDS]. JOUY, VICTOR JOSEPH ETIENNE DE. *Jeu de Cartes instructives. Musique ouvrage destiné à l'instruction de la jeunesse des sexes*. Paris: A.-A. Renouard, Rue Saint-André-des-Arts, no. 55, et Nicolle, Rue de Seine, no. 12, [ca. 1810].

48/48 cards (110 × 75 mm), comprising 36 progressive theoretical lessons and 12 musical examples, printed on one side only; versos 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.

€ 1.000

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*.

The sequence is arranged as a coherent course in elementary music. The opening cards introduce the concept of music as a universal language, distinguishing vocal from instrumental expression. Subsequent lessons explain the musical staff, clefs (*ut, sol, fa*), and the naming of notes (*ut, ré, mi, fa, sol, la, si*). Intermediate sections address rhythmic values, rests, and meter, while later cards treat the placement of sharps and flats in key signatures (“*de la position des dièzes et des bémols*”), the construction of scales, and the fundamental principles of harmony.

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



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1813

A SWISS TESTAMENT OF THE MARSEILLE CANON:
THE COMPLETE 1813 TAROT OF JACQUES BURDEL

A PERFECTLY PRESERVED AND FULLY COMPLETE EXAMPLE
OF THE LAST ARTISANAL SWISS TAROT DE MARSEILLE

41. [TAROT]. PROCHE, JEAN. *Swiss Edition of the Tarot de Marseille Type II*. Fribourg (Switzerland): Jacques Burdel, 1813.

78/78 cards (66 × 118 mm), woodcut on laid paper, hand-coloured à pochoir in red, blue, yellow, and green. Backs printed with a grey dotted wave pattern, typical of early nineteenth-century Swiss production. The deck follows the canonical *Tarot de Marseille Type II* iconography, retaining *La Papesse* and *Le Pape*. Titles are in French, set within rectangular cartouches; numerals are Roman additive (III, VIII, etc.). The Three of Coins bears the legend *Jacques Burdel, Cartier à Fribourg en Suisse, 1813*, engraved directly on the woodblock, serving as both signature and imprint.

€ 5.200

A blue fiscal stamp of the Canton of Fribourg appears on card XIII (*La Mort*), as required by local tax laws introduced after 1803. The initials “X.B.” on *Le Chariot* acknowledge collaboration with Xavier Burdel, Jacques’s father; J.P. appears on XVIII *La Lune* (lower left corner), while C.T., enclosed within a heart, is found on the Two of Cups. On XIII *La Mort* several faint abbreviations F.T., P.R., J., R., P.L. can be discerned. Printing is of fine quality, with clean outlines and vivid polychromy. The woodblocks are attributed to the Fribourg engraver Jean Proche, active in the early nineteenth century. The deck belongs to the Swiss–Marseille lineage, IPCS Type II, *Fribourg sub-pattern* (Burdel family workshop).

This 1813 edition marks the final flowering of the *Tarot de Marseille* tradition in Switzerland. Produced by Jacques Burdel, grandson of the renowned Claude Burdel (author of the 1751 *Tarot de Marseille* printed in Fribourg), the deck epitomizes the enduring fidelity of Swiss cardmakers to the French iconographic canon, even as regional variants were proliferating elsewhere.

The Burdel workshop’s use of precise woodcutting, balanced composition, and luminous stencil colouring lends the deck both artisanal integrity and visual harmony. Its historical significance lies in bridging the eighteenth-century Marseille school and the later Swiss adaptations, preserving the technical mastery and symbolic purity of the classical tarot within an early industrial context.



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The complete deck comprises seventy-eight cards: twenty-two trumps, four court cards, and ten pip cards in each of the four suits, Cups, Coins, Swords, and Batons. The Major Arcana follow the orthodox Marseille sequence, from *Le Bateleur* (I) to *Le Monde* (XXI), including *La Papesse* (II) and *Le Pape* (V), which were already being replaced by *Juno* and *Jupiter* in the Protestant Swiss regions. In this Fribourg edition, however, Burdel preserved the Catholic iconography intact, in keeping with local tradition.

The trumps retain their classical symbolic syntax: *La Lune* with its anthropomorphic face and twin dogs; *Le Chariot* drawn by two horses of opposing colours; and *Le Diable* with faces upon its knees and abdomen, motifs deriving from seventeenth-century French exemplars.

The court cards, Kings, Queens, Knights, and Valets, are dressed in stylised late-Rococo costume, their features simplified in comparison with Claude Burdel's 1751 deck. Numerals and suit emblems are symmetrically arranged, characteristic of the Type II Marseille pattern, while rosettes and floral fillers embellish the pip cards, occupying residual spaces of the woodblock, a decorative trait common in early nineteenth-century Swiss work. The colouring, bright and evenly applied, employs dense red and blue pigments, giving the deck its distinctive brilliance and reflecting the Swiss preference for vivid chromatic contrasts. The XIII card bears a small canton crest tax stamp, confirming legal circulation within Fribourg.

Collectively, the deck maintains the canonical *Tarot de Marseille* structure while expressing the regional autonomy of the Burdel workshop, an equilibrium between fidelity to tradition and local artistic individuality.

JACQUES BURDEL (1784–1862) was the grandson of Claude Burdel (1727–1799), master cardmaker from Lyon who settled in Fribourg in 1749. His father, François-Xavier Burdel (1755–post 1811), maintained the family workshop through the turn of the century, establishing it as the leading Swiss manufactory of playing cards. Tax registers from 1801–1803 record the Burdel firm producing over 50,000 packs of French-suited cards and 2,000 tarots, surpassing all other Swiss competitors. Jacques trained in the family atelier, inheriting both its blocks and its reputation. Around 1813, following his father's death, he assumed direction of the workshop and issued his own tarot signed and dated 1813. The initials *X.B.* on *Le Chariot* acknowledge collaboration with his father, while the engravings are attributed to Jean Proche, a local woodcutter active at that time. Under Jacques's supervision, the Burdel enterprise diversified into other designs, including the *Portrait de Fribourg* and German-suited *Jass* cards.

Beyond his craft, Burdel also served as director of the municipal prison, earning recognition as a respected civic figure. With his death in 1862, the Burdel lineage of master cardmakers came to an end. Their woodblocks were later acquired by Alphonse Favre, who reworked them to produce the *Tarot du Sultan*, an eccentric Orientalist reinterpretation that underscores the historical authenticity and artistic purity of Burdel's original model.



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CENSUS: AMONG THE KNOWN SWISS TAROTS OF THE LATE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES, THE TAROT DE MARSEILLE PRODUCED BY JACQUES BURDEL IN FRIBOURG IN 1813 OCCUPIES A POSITION OF EXCEPTIONAL RARITY. NO COMPLETE DECK HAS SURFACED IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET OVER THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, NOR IS ANY RECORDED IN PUBLIC AUCTION CATALOGUES OR COMMERCIAL ARCHIVES. The only fully attested complete example, formerly part of the Kaplan collection, is documented exclusively in bibliographical sources and has never been offered for sale. The British Museum preserves a group of fifteen cards, and the Penn Museum holds twenty-nine, both incomplete and acquired before 1900. Within this narrow corpus, fewer than four fragmentary sets are known worldwide, making the Burdel family's production among the rarest in Swiss playing-card history. Other contemporaneous workshops such as Gassmann or Favre occasionally appear on the market, yet always in partial or later form, while the older Rochias and Heri survive solely in museum holdings or facsimiles. This total absence of Burdel decks from modern circulation confirms their status as virtually unobtainable artefacts. A COMPLETE AND WELL-PRESERVED 1813 BURDEL DECK, THEREFORE, MUST BE REGARDED AS AN ALMOST UNIQUE SURVIVAL OF THE SWISS TAROT DE MARSEILLE TRADITION, OF THE HIGHEST HISTORICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL IMPORTANCE, AND OF EXTREME RARITY WITHIN THE EUROPEAN ANTIQUARIAN MARKET.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: S. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot Volume II*, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 198, 225, p. 343 (plate); K. WOWK. *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 129,133.

British Museum, 1896,0501.803:
https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1896-0501-803-

Penn Museum, no. 877115
[Playing Card, Tarot - 19316.6 | Collections - Penn Museum](#)

1815

« LA GARDE MEURT ET NE SE REND PAS »

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

42. [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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1830

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

RARE FRENCH TRANSLUCENT EROTIC DECK OF CARDS

43. [TRANSFORMATION CARDS]. *Translucent erotic deck*. Paris: ca. 1830.

Complete deck (85 × 58 mm), 52 hand-coloured engraved cards, arranged in four suits of thirteen cards each (Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, and Spades); square corners. Two cards (5 of Hearts and 4 of Diamonds) with slightly rounded corners, possibly replacements from another set. Each card reveals a concealed erotic image when held against a light source.

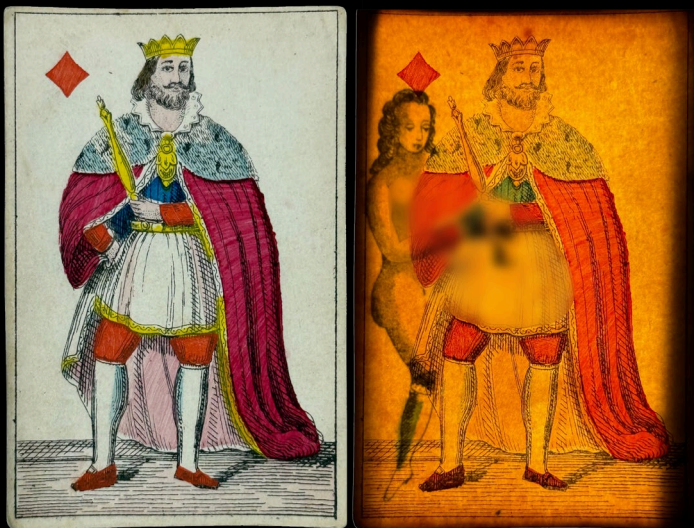
THE EROTIC IMAGES HIDDEN IN THE SUIT CARDS ARE OFTEN ENRICHED WITH VIBRANT BACKGROUNDS, WHILE THE COURT CARDS DIRECTLY PARTICIPATE IN THE EROTIC SCENES.

€ 4.200

The *Translucent Erotic Card Deck* essentially constitutes a Transformation Deck, a genre first printed in Germany in the early 19th century, characterized by suit signs being integrated into playful and humorous designs. Emerging in France during the same period, these translucent erotic decks represent an exceedingly rare and collectible synthesis of art, craftsmanship, and social commentary.

At first glance, the translucent deck appears to be an ordinary French playing deck from the Romantic era: the suits are conventional (Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, Spades), and the court figures, Kings, Queens, and Jacks, pose in seemingly innocent and decorous attitudes. Nothing untoward is apparent under normal lighting conditions. The licentious surprise is revealed only when a card is held up to a light source: by candlelight or lamp, the chaste figures transform to disclose concealed erotic, or even pornographic, scenes embedded within the card. Each card thus harbours a hidden, obscene secret, reserved for the complicit gaze of those who know where and how to look.

In the numeral cards, the suit symbols lose prominence when backlit, giving way entirely to the erotic image. In contrast, the court figures (King, Queen, Jack) cleverly interact with the concealed scenes. For example, behind a stern King of Spades, a nude woman might be revealed, engaging him in an intimate gesture. Behind a seemingly modest Queen, the same monarch may appear in a dishabille state with a lover.



[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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The illustrators exploited this dual narrative level: the front conveyed public morality, while the backlit image unveiled hidden libertinism. This contrast was integral to the amusement; contemporary audiences, particularly habitués of salons and libertine circles, would have appreciated the ironic opposition between outward decorum and private vice.

Appropriately, these cards were also known as *cartes à secret* or *cartes à transparence*, named for the allusive secrets they concealed. In some cases, the scenes incorporated elements of social or cultural satire: priests, soldiers, or cuckolded husbands were portrayed in ludicrous situations, maintaining a link to the eighteenth-century French tradition of *cartes licencieuses* (playing cards illustrated with satirical erotic vignettes).

These decks were likely sold semi-clandestinely, never openly advertised in official catalogues (also because they bore no publisher's marks or fiscal stamps), but obtainable through specialty shops dealing in curiosities or via discreet private channels. They are known to have circulated in brothels and other houses of pleasure. In such places, the cards could serve as an apparently innocent pastime: a client playing with a prostitute might, at a complicit signal, reveal the hidden obscene image, adding a playful element to the entertainment without immediate scandal. Similarly, in private gentlemen's salons, these cards probably served as *risqué* social diversions.

A telling clue to their practical use lies in the characteristic wear observed on surviving examples: many cards show candle burns or smoke stains along the edges. This is easily explained, at a time before electric light, the only way to illuminate the cards from behind was with an open flame, often a candle held close. In the excitement of revealing the hidden scene, it is unsurprising that some cards were held too near the flame, resulting in singed or scorched edges.

At a time when explicit depictions of eroticism were censored or taboo, these decks offered a discreet yet tantalizing form of private enjoyment, merging the functionality of a playing-card deck with the allure of hidden erotic art.

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

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



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1830

NAPOLEON'S REVOLUTION IN THE WORLD OF PLAYING CARDS:
«GATTEAUX DOUBLE-FIGURE», THE FRENCH NEW STANDARD NATIONAL PATTERN

44. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Gatteaux pattern*. Paris: 1816 (but 1830).

32/32 stencil-coloured woodblock cards (8,3 x 5,3 cm), French suits, single-ended named courts: 7 to 10, Ace, Jack, Queen, King. Jack of Clubs with complete medallion inscribed *Administ. Des Contrib. Indir. 1816* at the border and *GATTEAUX* at the centre; *Coq Gaulois* watermark (Louis Philippe I); square corners; versos plain and blank. The deck is based on the single-figure standard French pattern designed by the sculptor and engraver Nicolas-Marie Gatteaux, whose name appears at the centre of the shield on the Jack of Clubs.

€ 900

“After the Revolution, once Napoleon had assumed power, he wanted to redesign the now outmoded Revolutionary cards with one single pattern to be used in all France. For this task he commissioned the artist Jacques Louis David, whom he had appointed as official painter of the Revolution in 1804.

Lacking imagination, David employed the traditional names for the kings, namely CHARLEMAGNE, CAESAR, ALEXANDRE and DAVID; with their wives as queens and generals as jacks. Although David gave Napoleon the honour of posing as CAESAR for the king of diamonds, Napoleon was not altogether happy with the designs. He then commissioned Gatteaux to come up with a new standard pattern. Gatteaux's designs were finished in 1811, and his court cards are named: kings - Charles, David, Caesar and Alexandre; queens - Abigail, Hildegard, Calpurnie and Statira; jacks - Azael, Ogier, Curion and Parmenion. Unfortunately, these cards were not popular and in 1813 Gatteaux redrew the familiar Paris pattern, with the tried and tested court names of hearts: Charles, Judith and Lahire; clubs: Alexandre, Argine, and Lancelot; diamonds: Caesar, RACHEL, and Hector; spades: David, Pallas and Hogier. The first publication of the design in 1813 has the jack of clubs holding a shield with the inscription *Administ des droit réunis 1813* and the name *Gatteaux*. Other dates to appear on this shield are 1816, 1827 (when the courts became double-ended) and finally 1853 [as in the present deck]. The 1853 date was used for a number of years, after which the date on the shield finally disappeared. Although Napoleon's attempts at introducing a new card design failed, as a subject for the court cards he himself was not forgotten [...]” (Sylvia Man).

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021; K. WOWK. *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 74; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, p. 58; H. R. D'ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIV au XX siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906; P. MARTEAU, *Propos d'un cartier*, Le Vieux Papier, June 1937, pp. 141-143; J. BERRY, *Playing Cards of the World*. nos. 65, 66, 62; Cary, Fra, no. 25; W. H. WILLSHIRE, *A Descriptive catalogue of playing and other cards in the British Museum*, 1876.

1840

LEARNING BY PLAY:
A COMPLETE SET OF PEDAGOGICAL GRAMMAR CARDS
WITH AUTHOR'S SIGNATURE



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45. [EDUCATIONAL GAME]. DURU, HUGUES. *Grammaire illustrée mise en jeu, par Hugues Duru, auteur d'une nouvelle méthode d'orthographe. Jeu de 160 cartes lithographiées pour l'enseignement grammatical des enfants*. Paris, chez l'auteur, [1840].

Complete set of 160 cards (90 × 60 mm) lithographed on sturdy card stock. The cards are organized into four numbered series, each composed of a sequence of questions (marked *D.* for *Demande*) and corresponding answers (“*Réponse*”). Versos blank. Each series is numbered sequentially: first series (Nos. 1–40), second series (Nos. 41–80), third series (Nos. 81–120), and fourth series (Nos. 121–160). The rectos alternate between question cards illustrated with small narrative or historical vignettes and plain typographic answer cards. The cards are housed in the original publisher's box (160 × 250 × 30 mm), with gilt-tooled borders and a lithographed lid depicting a family gathered around a table in an educational setting. Affixed to the inside of the lid is the printed instruction sheet, signed in ink by the author H. Duru, authenticating the set and protecting it against counterfeiting.

€ 800

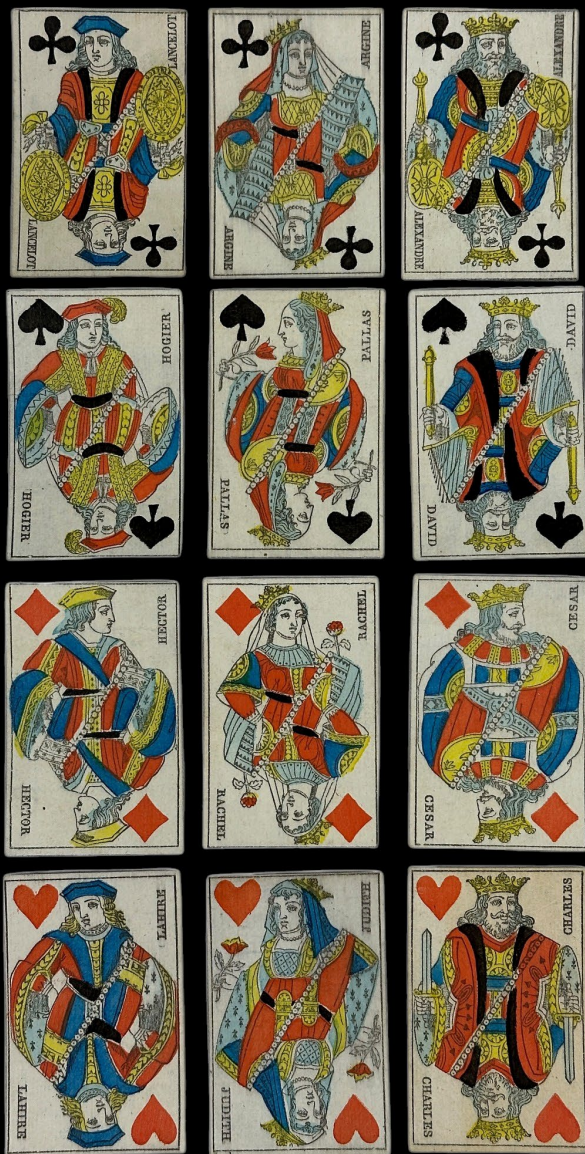
The cards are arranged in four series of forty, alternating illustrated questions with typographic answers. Subjects progress from definitions of words and parts of speech (Series I–II), to verbs and states of being (Series III), and finally to full conjugations of *avoir* and *être* (Series IV). The game combines visual memory and oral recitation, reinforcing grammatical learning through playful competition.

Produced during the educational reforms of the July Monarchy (Law of 1833), this set reflects the period's emphasis on popular schooling and playful pedagogy. Duru, author of the *Nouvelle méthode d'orthographe*, was among the independent pedagogues active in 1830s Paris who sought to make grammar accessible to young learners.

CONDITIONS: Small defects to the upper lid of the box; light handling marks on the cards; overall a good, complete set.

PROVENANCE: Author's signature *H. Duru* on the instruction leaf.

REFERENCES: CHEVALIER, JEAN-CLAUDE, *Histoire de la grammaire scolaire*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1968; COMPÈRE, MARIE-MADELEINE, *Histoire du système éducatif*, Paris: Belin, 2000.



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1850

NAPOLEON'S REVOLUTION IN THE WORLD OF PLAYING CARDS: «GATTEAUX DOUBLE-FIGURE», THE FRENCH NEW STANDARD NATIONAL PATTERN

46. [PLAYING CARDS]. *French Deck*. Paris: ca. 1850.

52/52 cards (83 x 53 mm), French suits, stencil-coloured, electrotyped, double-ended named courts. Jack of Clubs with medallion inscribed *Administ. des Contrib. Indir. 1853* at the border and *Gatteaux* at the centre; King of Clubs with *Galv. Hulot* (faded) on shields; eagle facing left watermark (*Napoleon III*); square corners; versos with purple/pink dotted and branched pattern. The note *Galv. Hulot* indicates that the cards were reproduced by galvanoplasty or electrotyping, implemented by Anatole Gustave Hulot at the beginning of the 19th century.

€ 700

The present deck is based on a double-imaged standard French pattern designed by the French sculptor and engraver Nicolas Marie Gatteaux whose name appears in the centre of the shield on the Jack Of Clubs.

“After the Revolution, once Napoleon had assumed power, he wanted to redesign the now outmoded Revolutionary cards with one single pattern to be used in all France. For this task he commissioned the artist Jacques Louis David, whom he had appointed as official painter of the Revolution in 1804. Lacking imagination, David employed the traditional names for the kings, namely CHARLEMAGNE, CAESAR, ALEXANDRE and DAVID; with their wives as queens and generals as jacks. Although David gave Napoleon the honour of posing as CAESAR for the king of diamonds, Napoleon was not altogether happy with the designs. He then commissioned Gatteaux to come up with a new standard pattern. Gatteaux’s designs were finished in 1811, and his court cards are named: kings – Charles, David, Caesar and Alexandre; queens – Abigail, Hildegard, Calpurnie and Statira; jacks – Azael, Ogier, Curion and Parmenion. Unfortunately, these cards were not popular and in 1813 Gatteaux redrew the familiar Paris pattern, with the tried and tested court names of hearts: Charles, Judith and Lahire; clubs: Alexandre, Argine, and Lancelot; diamonds: Caesar, RACHEL, and Hector; spades: David, Pallas and Hogier. The first publication of the design in 1813 has the jack of clubs holding a shield with the inscription *Administ des droit réunis 1813* and the name *Gatteaux*. Other dates to appear on this shield are 1816, 1827 (when the courts became double-ended) and finally 1853 [as in the present deck]. The 1853 date was used for a number of years, after which the date on the shield finally disappeared. Although Napoleon’s attempts at introducing a new card design failed, as a subject for the court cards he himself was not forgotten [...]” (Man).

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021; K. WOWK. *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 74; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, p. 58; H. R. D’ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIV au XX siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906; P. MARTEAU, *Propos d’un cartier*, Le Vieux Papier, June 1937, pp. 141-143; J. BERRY, *Playing Cards of the World*. nos. 65, 66, 62; Cary, Fra, no. 25; W. H. WILLSHIRE, *A Descriptive catalogue of playing and other cards in the British Museum*, 1876.



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1850

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

47. [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: [Word of Playing cards website](#).



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and High Res images

1850

A FINE FRENCH «COSTUMES DECK»

48. [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. Each suit represents a distinct thematic tableau:

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: [Word of Playing cards website](#).



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and High Res images

1850

A FINE FRENCH «COSTUMES DECK»

49. [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 differentiated by a crown on the colour 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. 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, 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: [Word of Playing cards website](#).

1860

BETWEEN MARSEILLE AND SWITZERLAND: THE «TAROT DE BESANÇON»,
WITNESS TO A TRANS-CONFESSIONAL ICONOGRAPHY

50. [TAROT]. GEORGIN, FRANÇOIS. *Tarots de 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. RENE D’ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIVe au XXe siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906; S. KAPLAN, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot Volume I*, U.S. Games Systems, 1986, pp. 245; K. Wowk, *Playing Cards of The World*, Lutterworth Press, 1983, p. 13; IPCS website.



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1880

A RARE «HOLD-TO-LIGHT» EROTIC PIQUET PACK WITH MIS-INDEXED SUITS
CONCEIVED FOR MAGICIANS AND SALONS

51. [EROTIC & CONJURING DECK]. Anonymous. *Jeu libertin à transparence*. Paris: ca. 1880.

Complete deck of 32 cards [90 x 55 mm], printed on laminated sandwich stock of two thin outer layers with an absorbent inner core. Each card framed within a border coloured according to suit. Printing executed by stencil over monochrome engraved outlines. The pack consists of two groups of sixteen cards each: the red suits (Hearts and Diamonds) without numerical indices, and the black suits (Spades and Clubs), sequentially numbered 01–16 at lower left. Each card bears two diagonal indices, permitting a change of identity when rotated. Erotic vignettes in Art Nouveau style, engraved in monochrome, appear only when viewed against transmitted light, employing the *cartes à transparence* technique.

€ 2.500

This rare Parisian *Jeu Libertin* combines two fashionable innovations of the late nineteenth century. The first is the hold-to-light process, practiced in France since the 1830s and revived during the Belle Époque, in which *risqué* images become visible only in transparency (see lot 42). The second is the principle of mis-indexed cards, long favored by conjurers, whereby the rotation of the card alters its apparent denomination or suit.

This hybrid construction renders the deck both an erotic *jeu de société* and an ingenious stage prop, conceived for the amused complicity of salons, cafés-concerts, and libertine circles. The deck follows the French piquet format of thirty-two cards. Each card is designed with dual diagonal indices, enabling magicians to compel or reveal any predetermined choice with deceptive ease, multiplying the possibilities of prestidigitation.

The concealed erotic imagery provides the climactic moment of performance. When placed against a light source, each card discloses an intimate vignette of one or more nude figures, their coiffures, gestures, and sinuous poses reflecting the sensual vocabulary of *Art Nouveau*. A conjurer might first astonish the audience with sleights of hand based on the ambiguous indices, then conclude by revealing the clandestine tableau, eliciting a mixture of laughter and complicity.

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; World of Playing Cards, *Transparencies and Hold-to-Light Cards*.

1880

HAND COLOURED DECK FOR «JEU DE L'ALUETTE»
THE ONLY FRENCH GAME PLAYED WITH SPANISH CARD SUITE

52. [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.

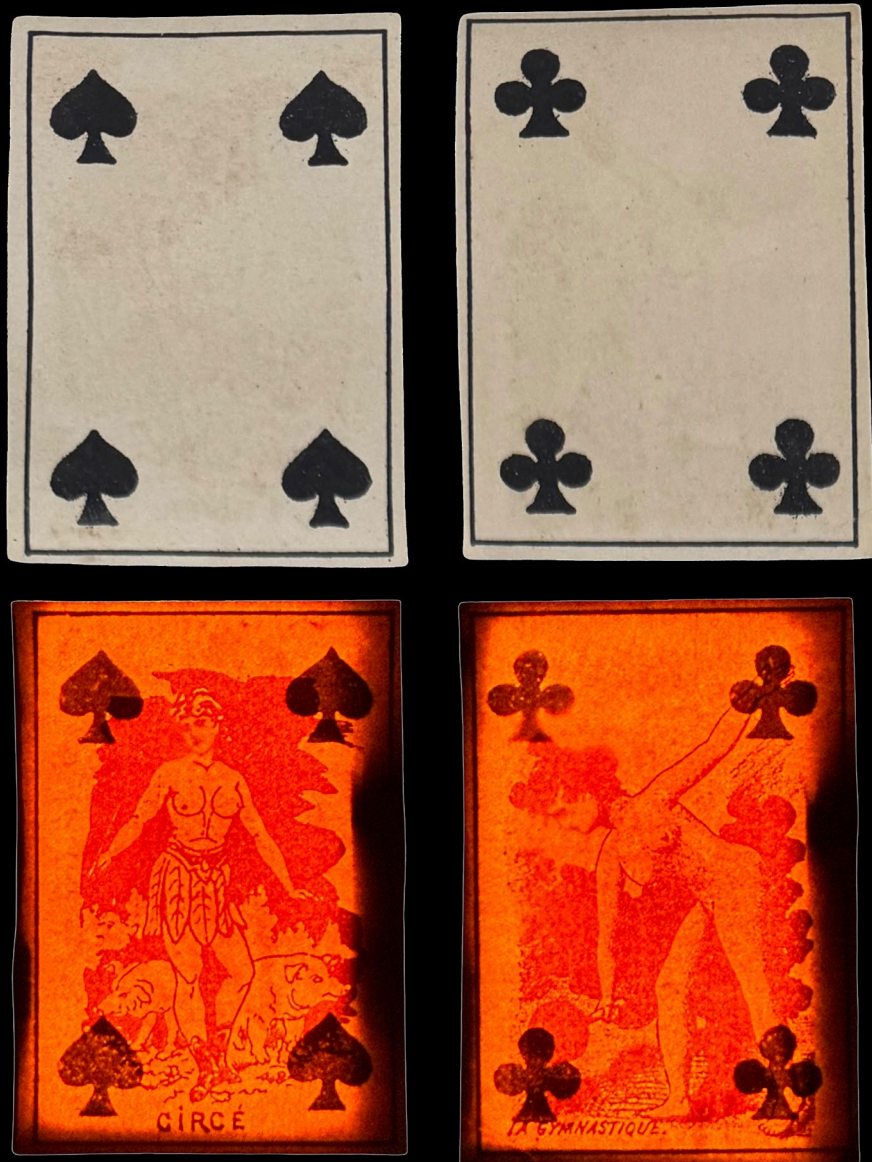
CONDITIONS: Two pip cards with minor brown spots or marks; six of coins with slight surface damage to one long edge; overall in good condition.

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

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

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]. *Cards Changeant*. Paris: David, ca. 1890.



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Complete with 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
«FROM CHAOS TO CREATION»:
THE FIRST TAROT CONCEIVED FOR DIVINATION

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH DECK
PRESERVING THE ESOTERIC SYSTEM OF ETTEILLA (TYPE I)

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

78/78 plus two white cards (120 × 65 mm), chromolithographed printing on stiff cardboard, the versos bear small green decorative patterns, straight corners. First trump inscribed “ETTEILLA” at upper margin. The deck belongs to the so-called Etteilla Type I tradition, faithfully reproducing the deck created by Jean-Baptiste Alliette in 1791.

[TOGETHER WITH]

[MANUAL]. *Manière de tirer le Grand Etteilla ou Tarots Égyptiens composé de 78 cartes et de 118 tableaux*. Paris: Grimaud, sd [ca. 1890].

8vo, original printed wrappers, 168 pp, for the booklet.

€ 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 I 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 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: Perfectly preserved.

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.



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1890

«FROM CHAOS TO CREATION»:
THE FIRST TAROT CONCEIVED FOR DIVINATION

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH DECK
PRESERVING THE ESOTERIC SYSTEM OF ETTEILLA (TYPE II)

56. [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.



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1890

«FROM CHAOS TO CREATION»:
THE FIRST TAROT CONCEIVED FOR DIVINATION

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH DECK
PRESERVING THE ESOTERIC SYSTEM OF ETEILLA (TYPE III)

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

78/78 cards (128 × 80 mm), Etteilla Type III, chromolithographed printing on cardboard, card backs decorated with orange patterns on a pink field, round corners. The first Atout bears the name Etteilla at the top.

€ 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 III 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: Perfectly preserved.

PROVENANCE: Card 62 bears a tax stamp, “Avril 12 1890 République Française,” used in France from 1890 to 1917. Playing card stamps were applied when the deck was marketed, not when it was printed, and in the country where it was sold, not where it was produced..

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

1890

THE MOST USED DIVINATION DECK BESIDE TAROT

58. [TAROT]. *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 Le Normand.

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.

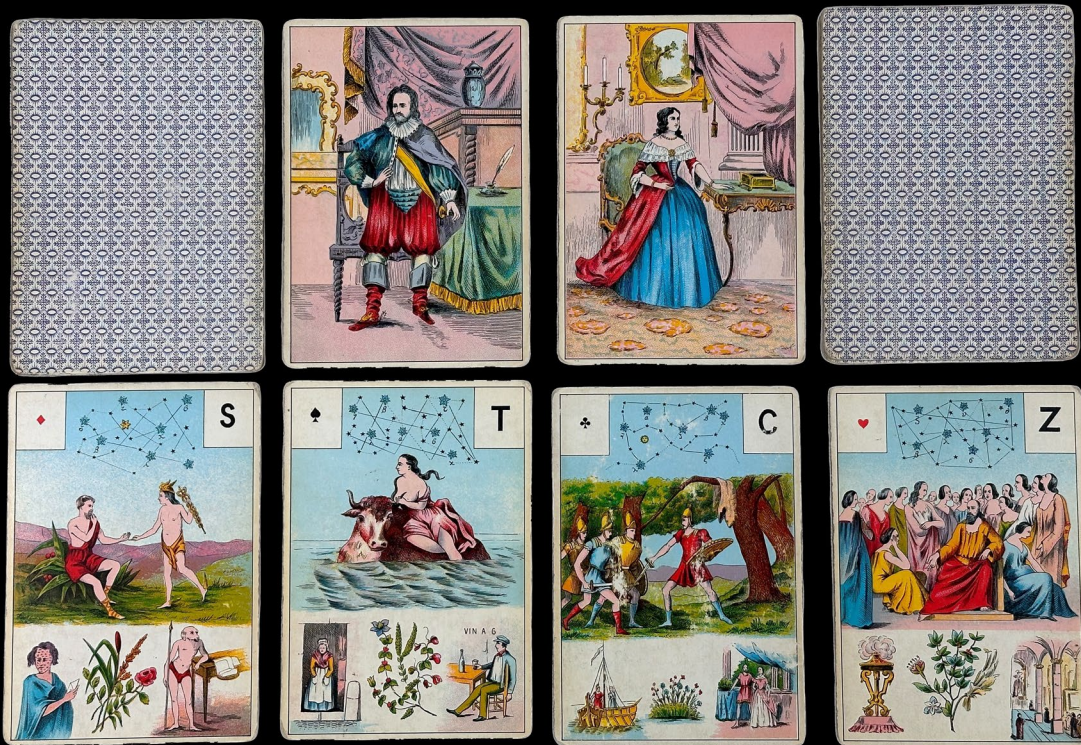
Each card features:

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

59. [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*.

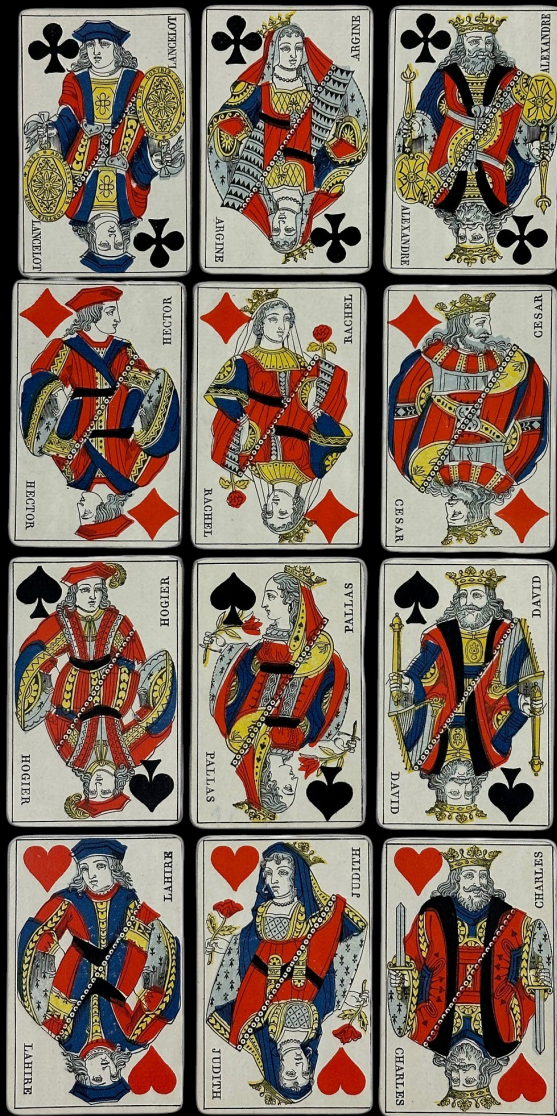
€ 600

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 Français*, 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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1890
UNUSED PIQUET DECK
THE «GATEAUX DOUBLE-FIGURE» PATTERN

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

Piquet deck of 32/32 stencil-coloured electrotyped cards (83 x 53 mm), French suits, double-ended named courts. *Jack of Clubs* with medallion inscribed *Administ. des Contrib. Indir. 1853* at the border and *GATTEAUX* at the centre; King of Clubs with *Galv. Hulot* on the shields; Ace of Clubs with 1890 tax stamp; watermark *CI* within an oakleaf wreath; rounded gilt corners; versos decorated with a dark blue and red plaid pattern. Preserved in the original box labelled *Piquet No. 90*.

€ 550

The present deck is based on the double-figure standard French pattern derived from the design by the sculptor and engraver Nicolas-Marie Gatteaux, whose name appears at the centre of the shield on the *Jack of Clubs*.

The note *Galv. Hulot* indicates that the cards were reproduced by galvanoplasty or electrotyping, a process implemented by Anatole Gustave Hulot at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The deck consists of 32 cards forming a set for Piquet, a card game that uses only the Ace and the Six through King of each suit.

“For piquet there were only thirty-six cards used, and the old emblematic *atouts* of the tarot series were dispensed with, together with the Two, Three, Four, and Five of each suit, and the fourth court card, the *cavalier*. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the sixes were also left out, so that today a piquet pack has only thirty-two cards.” (Hargrave).

CONDITIONS: Apparently unused.

PROVENANCE: 1. Tax stamp *Avril 12 1890 République Français*, used in France from 1890 to 1917; playing card stamps showed the tax was paid on playing cards, where placed when the deck was marketed, not printed, and in the country of use, not in the country of printing. 2. Watermark *CI* in oakleaf wreath.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021; K. WOWK. *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 74; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, p. 58; H. R. D'ALLEMAGNE, *Les cartes à jouer du XIV au XX siècle*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906; P. MARTEAU, *Propos d'un cartier*, Le Vieux Papier, no. 723, June 1937, pp. 141-143. The International Playing-Card Society Website.

1893

19TH CENTURY, COMPLETE, COLOURED DIVINATION TAROTS DECK:
THE «TAROTS CHINOISE»

61. [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. FODRAZ & 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 System, 1994, pp. 476–479.



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1899

NEW – UNOPENED!

THE FIRST INTEGRATION OF CARTOMANCY AND CHIROMANCY
INTO A NEW DIVINATION TOOL

62. [TAROT]. *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 cellophane 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 Art Deco-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.
BNF, Frbnf43589290. Gallica: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10543190d>
P. ENDEBROCK, *Playing-card Pages* website.



The photograph above shows the actual deck offered here. As noted, the pack remains sealed in its original wrapping and cannot be inspected without diminishing the value and appeal of its untouched state. All subsequent detail images are taken from bibliographical and reference sources: they do not depict the actual copy, but are reproduced solely for descriptive and documentary purposes.

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United Kingdom/US



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1765

RARE 18TH COMPLETE ENGLISH PLAYING-CARD DECK,
INTENDED FOR EXPORT TO THE AMERICAN COLONIES

THE EARLIEST DECKS TO CIRCULATE IN AMERICA

IPCS ENGLIS PATTERN 48 , TAX STAMP TYPE A8
«AN ACE WITH NO TAX!»

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

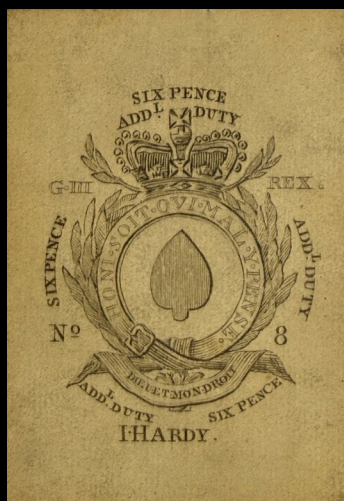
52/52 cards [93 x 65 mm], woodblock-printed and hand-coloured by stencil in vermilion red and deep black. Court figures are single half-length portraits in the pre-Jones London tradition, with value indicators in the upper corners. The iconography follows the so-called "*Old Frizzle*" pattern, still 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. HAND-COLOURED, COMPLETE, IN PERFECT CONDITIONS.

€ 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 .

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: J. BERRY, *Taxation on Playing-Cards in England from 1711 to 1960*, IPCS Papers, p. 68; C. SCHREIBER, *Catalogue of the collection of playing cards bequeathed to the British Museum by Lady Charlotte Schreiber*, Italian, no. 44; C. SCHREIBER, *Playing Cards of Various Ages and Countries selected from the collection of Lady Charlotte Schreiber*, III, pl. 90; K. WOKW, *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, pl. 214; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 227–231.



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

THE A4 TYPE ACE OF SPADE

64. [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*. In Hunt & Sons' woodcut, 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 Papers, p. 64, 2001; 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.



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and High Res images

1817-1818

RARE FIRST EDITION, FIRST ISSUE, UNCUT OF ONE OF THE MOST ARTISTIC
AND IMAGINATIVE TRANSFORMATION DECKS FROM A TRADITIONAL VIENNESE TALE

65. [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, amazing conditions.

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; WYNNE, MARJORIE, AND MAYOR, *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 and 339.



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1828
A GEORGIAN-VICTORIAN TRANSITIONAL DECK
WITH THE OFFICIAL FISCAL «THE OLD FRIZZLE» ACE OF SPADES

66. [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 pf Spade.

REFERENCES: J. BERRY, *Taxation on Playing-Cards in England from 1711 to 1960*, IPCS Papers, no. 3, 2001; 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: accession nos. 1904,0511.24.1-52 (Hunt & Sons, c.1828).



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1840

THE «ENGLISH TRADITIONAL PATTERN»

67. [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.

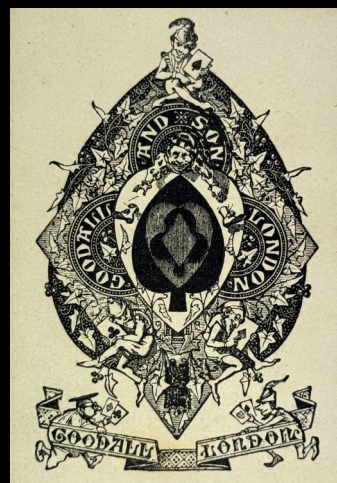
Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense, translating to *Shame on him who thinks evil of it*, is an old French phrase and the motto of the Order of the Garter, the most prestigious order of chivalry in the United Kingdom, established by King Edward III in 1348. The inclusion of this motto on the *Ace of Spades* was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



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1867-1875

FROM «DUTY» TO «TRADEMARK»: A GOODALL PACK WITH BRANDED ACE OF SPADES, PRE-INDICES, FEATURING THE «SUICIDE KING» AND DECORATIVE REVERSE

68. [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

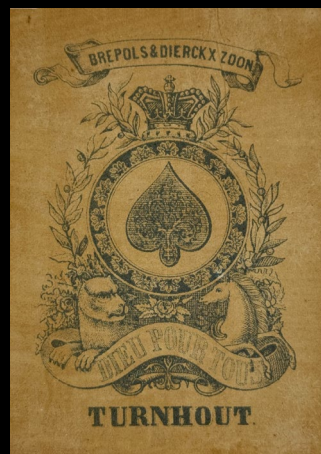
This rare Victorian pack is a striking example of the transition in English cardmaking following the reduction of duty in 1862. Freed from state control, the *Ace of Spades* became a vehicle for corporate identity and branding, here executed with exceptional decorative richness. The ornamental back reflects 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 Paper no. 3, 2001. *The International Playing-Card Society* website.



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1870

BETWEEN TRADITION AND INNOVATION: A SINGLE-HEADED ENGLISH PATTERN
PRODUCED IN TURNHOUT'S GOLDEN AGE OF CARD-MAKING
BY BREPOLS, THE PRINTER OF THE TOWN'S FIRST DECK

69. [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 ZOO 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, under 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.



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1910
A PROMOTIONAL DECK OF THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST,
REFLECTING NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE AND THE HISTORICAL NARRATIVES
OF THE NATION'S WESTERN FRONTIER

70. [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, vol. 32, no. 4, 2004: 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, 222: pp. 307–310.



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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»

71. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Naipes Historico Ibero Americano*. 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 colonisation of the New World took place. The suit of *bastos* represents indigenous leaders, fauna, flora, and symbols of the pre-Columbian world. The suits of *oros*, *copas* and *espadas* are devoted to the reigns of Ferdinand V, Charles I, and Philip II, the monarchs under whom the discovery and colonisation 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*, Victoria: 198: pp. 86-86, no. 676.

Germany/Austria/Belgium



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1550

TWELVE PRINTED FRAGMENTS FROM A MID 16TH CENTURY
GERMAN CARD DECK, WIDE-FORMAT «STUKELEY TYPE»

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

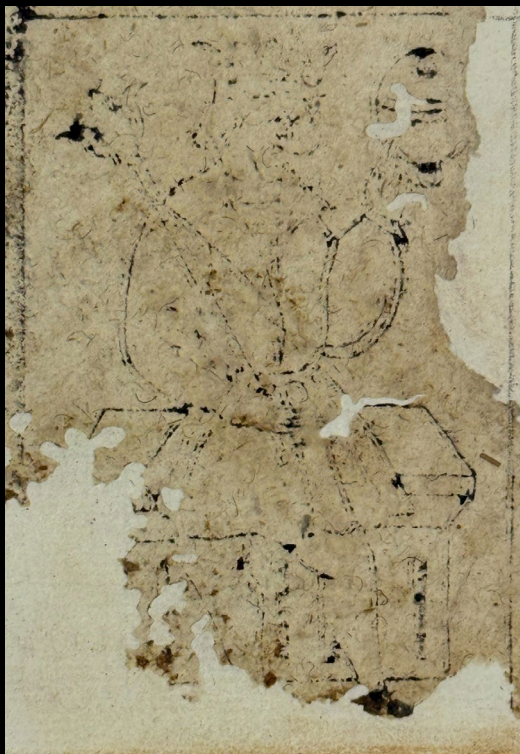
The surviving material consists of twelve fragments of playing cards (80 × 60 mm), uncut, affixed to three paper sheets (four fragments per sheet), each sheet mounted on a restoration backing card (170 × 110 mm). The fragments remain in their original relative layout as printed, untrimmed and unfolded. 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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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*, *The Playing-Card*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1996, pp. 32–49.

Print; Playing-Card, Stukeley Cards, British Museum Collection Online. The Trustees of the British Museum:

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>.



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1770

SIXTEEN FRENCH-CAPTIONED COURT CARDS FROM AN 18TH CENTURY GORIZIA-TAROCK DECK, A SUPERB TESTIMONY TO CROSS-REGIONAL PRINT TRADITION

73. [TAROT]. *Marseillais-Lombard Pattern*. Gorizia-Trieste, under Habsburg rule: ca. 1770.

Set of sixteen out of seventy-eight (120 × 60 mm) woodcut hand-coloured playing cards representing the complete series of court figures, Valet, Cavalier, Reine, Roy, of the four Latin suits: *Batons*, *Deniers*, *Coupes*, *Épées*. Hand-coloured in red, Parisian blue, and ochre yellow, mounted on rag-paper cardstock. French captions exhibit orthographic anomalies relative to classical Marseille spelling (for example *Reine de Spee* instead of *Reine d'Épée* and absence of apostrophes). Single-ended format, blank versos.

€ 1.800

This exceptional set of sixteen *Honneurs* constitutes all four court cards in each Latin suit, originally part of a seventy-eight-card tarot deck known as *Marseillais-Lombard*, in the literature often referred to as *Gorizia Tarock* or *Lombardisches Tarock*. Produced in the culturally pluralistic and multilingual *Alto Adriatico* region, Trieste or Gorizia, during the final third of the eighteenth century, the deck represents a rare variant of the tarot tradition in which French Marseille iconography merges with Austro-Hungarian graphic production methods. The court cards retain the classical French nomenclature (*Valet*, *Cavalier*, *Reine*, *Roy*), while the singular form *Baston* and orthographic peculiarities such as *Reine de Spee* (lacking apostrophe) instead of *Reine d'Épée* confirm its affiliation with eighteenth-century Marseille iconography rather than later standard French. The long, narrow format corresponds to production conventions typical of Habsburg territories between 1760 and 1820.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: E. KRAULAND, *Spielkarten aus dem Landesmuseum Kärnten*, in MUCHITSCH & BRINCKMANN-BLAHA, *Rudolfinum – Jahrbuch des Landesmuseums für Kärnten*, Klagenfurt: Landesmuseum Kärnten, pp. 265–278; S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table: The Playing Card in History and Art*, 1978.



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1790

«TRAPPOLA» CARDS AND THE ITALIAN INFLUENCE:
A TESTAMENT TO ARTISTIC HYBRIDITY IN EUROPEAN PLAYING DECKS

74. [PLAYING CARDS]. «*Trappola*» cards *Prague Pattern*. Austria (likely Vienna or Styria): ca. 1790.

18/36 (135 × 58 mm) playing cards from a *Trappola* deck, conforming to the *Grande Format* inherited from Italian prototypes. Woodblock printed and coloured with stencils in red, yellow, green, and light blue pigments. Printed on sturdy pasteboard. The cards display the Italian suits of *Swords*, *Batons*, *Cups*, and *Coins*, with double-ended court cards featuring richly stylized figures in the characteristic late eighteenth-century Central European style. The proportions and design are consistent with productions from the Austrian region, particularly Vienna or Styria, dating from the late eighteenth to the very early nineteenth century.

The set is composed of: *Coins*: II, VII, VIII, X; *Cups*: II, VII, VIII, IX, X, Jack, Knight, King; *Swords*: VII, VIII, IX, X, Jack; *Batons*: Jack.

€ 1.800

This game constitutes one of the most significant examples of the diffusion of Italian visual and gaming traditions into Central Europe, a process that generated distinctive hybrid productions flourishing from the late sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The term *Trappola* originally referred both to the game itself and to the specific deck designed for it, composed of thirty-six cards derived from a truncated version of the Italian fifty-two-card pack.

The earliest recorded reference to the *Trappola* game dates to 1592 in Upper Austria, in the city of Wels, under the name *Träppelin*. Subsequent mentions appear in Bohemia and Germany throughout the early seventeenth century, attesting to its rapid diffusion within the Holy Roman Empire. Scholars agree that the deck was directly inspired by imported Italian cards, particularly those belonging to the Ferrarese family of patterns, a lineage of designs originating from Ferrara and Modena in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, celebrated for their quality and aesthetic coherence.

CONDITIONS: Light marks of use and an overall antique *patina* on all cards; overall a good, rare set.

REFERENCES: J. BERRY, *Playing cards of the world*, 1995, V, p. 4; C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 100-130; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 54-55; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, p. 99; T. DEPAULIS, *Some Remarks on the Discovery of Trappola Cards in a Freistadt Account Book of 1559-62*, in *The Playing-Card*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2022; N. SHOCKLEY, *Exploring the Italian Origins of the Trappola Deck*, 2024.



N.º 116

75. [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.



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1860

ORIGINAL FIRST EDITION, FIRST ISSUE OF THE
«JEAN HACHETTE» TRANSFORMATION DECK

77. [TRANSFORMATION CARDS]. *Jean Hachette*. Darmstadt: Maximilian Frommann, ca. 1860.

52/52 cards (90 x 65 mm), chromolithography, printed on thick card stock, backs decorated with brown geometric motifs, square corners.

€ 1.600

Jeu à transformation (“Transformation Game”) is the term used for a particular type of deck first printed in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in which the suit signs are incorporated into the humorous or artistic design.

The pack takes its name, *Jeanne Hachette* (Jean the Hatchet), from the illustration on the *Queen of Spades*, depicting a scene from 1472 when Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, in his campaign to expand his duchies at the expense of his rival and brother-in-law Louis XI, attacked the town of Beauvais, and the sixteen-year-old Jeanne, wielding two axes, led the townspeople to victory.

This original Frommann deck is identified by the initials of the maker printed on the *Eight of Diamonds*, and the first issue is distinguished by designs printed in brown ink.

At one time, *Jean Hachette* was mistakenly identified with *Jeanne d’Arc*, and thus the deck is occasionally referred to by that name in earlier literature.

MAXIMILIAN FROMMANN was a German printer, publisher, and playing-card manufacturer active in Marktplatz, Darmstadt, from 1835 to 1850, and in Schützenstraße after 1850 until 1866, when the firm became *Frommann & Bunte*.

CONDITION: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE. *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021; M. STUCKBERRY. *She Came from Nowhere: The Tale of Jeanne Hachette*, 2019; A. FIELD, *Transformation Playing Cards, The creative art that transforms playing card suit signs into pictures*, U.S. Games Systems, no. 35; J. ORTIZ-PATIÑO, *The Jaime Ortiz-Patiño collection of early playing cards*, no. 65. P. RENDEBROCK, *Playing-card Pages Website*.

1870

THE «BOHEMIAN-PRAGER PATTERN»

78. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Austrian Deck*, Vienna: Josef Glanz, ca. 1870.

32/32 cards (94 x 55 mm), wood-engraved and stencil-coloured. *Daus* (two) of Hearts with *Wein* in a cartouche, *Daus* of Acorns with maker's name *Josef Glanz*, *Eight of Bells* with maker's ink stamp and Austrian tax stamp. Square corners, versos with red, black, and white zigzag design.

€ 1.300

This deck features the traditional German suits, Acorns, Leaves, Hearts, and Bells, instead of the more familiar French (Spades, Clubs, Hearts, Diamonds) or Italian (Swords, Clubs, Cups, Coins) suits.

The *Bohemian* or *Prager Pattern* is a type of German suited playing card design that originated in the sixteenth century and descends from some of the oldest German-suited packs. It preserves influences from early German cardmakers, such as Heinrich Hauk and shares many common traits with the Bavarian and Franconian patterns. In neighboring regions, notably Austria, it appears as the *Salzburger Pattern*. Through centuries of reproduction, these designs were copied from workshop to workshop, retaining various archaic stylistic features that eventually evolved into standardized patterns.

Typically comprising thirty-two or thirty-six cards, the version described here consists of thirty-two single-ended cards (King, *Ober* or Cavalier, *Unter* or Knave, Deuce, 10–7). Card no. 10 in each suit bears a Roman numeral, while the remaining cards are unnumbered. Among the most distinctive characteristics of this pattern are the seated Kings, each holding two suit symbols, one on either side of the head, unlike the Franconian pattern, whose Kings display only one. Although there are several shared features between the Bohemian and Franconian types, the court figures of the Bohemian pattern are simply dressed, appear stoic and immobile, and recall the monumental quality of Gothic sculpture.

Although primarily associated with Czechoslovakia and the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, the *Bohemian* or *Prager Pattern* holds significance that transcends regional boundaries. It embodies the artistic sensibilities of the Renaissance and early modern periods, evident in both the detailed rendering of the royal figures and the military-themed Knaves, who often carry long spears or halberds, swords, and occasionally musical instruments. The numeral cards frequently incorporate small vignettes at the lower part of the design, depicting rustic scenes or animals.



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All four *Kings* are seated on chairs shown in side view. The *Kings* of Hearts and Leaves face the left side of the card and hold scepters in their right hand. The *Kings* of Acorns and Bells face the right side; while the *King* of Acorns also holds his sceptre in his right hand, the *King* of Bells holds it in his left. Each *King* bears two suit symbols, one on either side of the head, a defining characteristic of this pattern.

The *Obers* (Cavaliers) of Hearts, Bells, and Leaves closely follow those of the Franconian pattern, but the *Ober* of Acorns carries two swords instead of one.

The *Unters* (Knives) of Leaves and Bells are likewise like their Franconian counterparts, except that the pipe-playing *Unter* of Leaves now looks to his left, and the *Unter* of Bells grips his sword with both hands at the hilt. The *Unters* of Hearts and Acorns mirror the Franconian versions with their respective designs reversed. These military-themed *Knives* further underscore the pattern's Renaissance and early modern artistic roots.

All four *Deuces* bear coats of arms, with the *Deuce* of Acorns also showing a bear alongside the maker's name.

Most of the numeral cards feature small illustrations or vignettes:

10 of Hearts: Cupid shooting an arrow into a heart atop a pyramid

10 of Bells: Two musicians and a performing bear

9 of Bells: A prancing horse tethered to a stake

8 of Bells: A dog and the maker's name

9 of Acorns: A transfixed bird

9 of Leaves: A goat

In these cards, one can observe a blend of rural scenes and animals that reflects the long artistic heritage of this pattern.

CONDITIONS: A few very faint finger marks, *Ten of Acorns* with a small restored tear to the lower edge; overall, a very good deck.

PROVENANCE: Dudley Ollis' collection.

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.

1870

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

79. [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* (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, wopc.co.uk.



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1875

A FINE SWISS «COSTUMES DECK»

80. [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: [Word of Playing cards website](#).



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1880-1910

BOURGEOIS DIVINATION IN LATE 19TH CENTURY THURINGIA:
A PERFECTLY PRESERVED EDITION OF THE «LENORMAND ORACLE»

81. [TAROT]. *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.



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1880

A RARE AUSTRO-ITALIAN PRODUCTION UNITING BYRON, MACHIAVELLI, AND VICTOR
HUGO BENEATH THE SINGLE EMBLEM OF TRIESTE'S COSMOPOLITAN CULTURE

82. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Historical Deck*. Trieste: A. Mengotti, ca. 1880.

52/52 cards (95 × 50 mm), printed by lithography and stencil-coloured on medium-thick pasteboard, square corners, versos plain. On the Ace of Hearts appears the black imprint *Fabbrica Carte da Giuoco di A. Mengotti, Trieste*, contained within a circular belt motif. The backs feature humorous aphorisms such as *La modista mi ha detto che questo cappello mi ringiovanisce di vent'anni... – E tu allora mettime due* (“The milliner told me this hat makes me look twenty years younger... Then you should wear two of them”), a typical example of popular satire of the period, along with comic vignettes printed in black on a cream ground.

€ 700

The deck belongs to the French-suited type, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, Spades, each containing double-ended court figures identified by the names of famous historical and literary personages, and for the Queens, the representation of four different nations. The portraits are drawn in a fine linear style, printed in black and hand-stenciled in red, blue, yellow, and ochre, employing a restrained yet effective palette characteristic of provincial late-nineteenth-century Italian production. The pip cards are plain and undecorated.

Among the identified court figures are Byron, Greca, Ziani (Sebastiano Ziani, Doge of Venice, 1172–1178), N. Machiavel, Alemana, Ali Mehemet, V. Hugo, Spagnola, Lear, Francese, Schiller, and Louis XIV, thus blending characters from mythology, world literature, and European history.

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

PROVENANCE: On the Ace of Heart, the Austrian fiscal stamp *K. K. Kartenstempel* in blue with a red double-headed eagle. The stamp, valued at 30 Kreuzer, was in use in the Austrian Empire from 1882 to 1899 and identifies decks with more than thirty-six cards, not lacquered and not washable.

REFERENCES: G. BERNARDI, *Due secoli di carte da gioco a Trieste*, p. 48; IPCS 31-3, p. 100; K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 20; S. MANN, *All cards on the table*, Verlag, 1980, no. 11-13.

BNF, Collection Paul Marteau. Recueil. Cartes à jouer: [\[Jeu de cartes italien au portrait à deux têtes\]](#): [\[estampe\]](#) | [Gallica](#).



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1900

THE «AUSTRIAN TAROCK PATTERN TYPE A»
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF THE «WORK AND PLAY» TAROT

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

54/54 tarot cards (114 x 62 mm), chromolithography, back of the cards enriched by a double-ended neoclassical decoration, round corners, French suits. Tax stamp and printer's device with *Ferd. Piatnik & Söhne Ag – Wien – Registrierte Schutzmarke* on the Ace of Hearts, *Ferd. Piatnik & Söhne Ag* on the Jacks of Diamonds. Original Box *The finest Ladie-Tarok*.

€ 1.100

The deck belongs to the pattern called *Austrian Tarock Pattern Type A*. Four suits of 8 cards each (King, Queen, Knight, Jack, and Hearts and Diamonds Ace–4, and Spades and Clubs 7–10) plus twenty-two trump cards. The trump cards depict scenes of outdoor life in various countries. The trumps and court cards are double-ended, and the trumps display a different scene at each end. They are numbered with Roman numerals. Trump number II invariably has at one end the picture of a crowned eagle, sword in claw, perched on a rock inscribed with *Industrie Und Glück*, the *Fool*, unnumbered trump, is always portrayed as a stage musician.

Three patterns of these *Tarock* cards are extant, distinguishable by the illustration on Trump No. III. In Style A, as in this deck, Trump No. III depicts a well scene; in Style B, 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. Exhibiting a truly international flavor, the cards feature sultans smoking pipes, peasants laboring in 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 shows at one end a young boy dancing with either a zither or harp, and at the other end 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; 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 B»
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF THE «WORK AND PLAY» TAROT

84. [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 marls 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»
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF THE «WORK AND PLAY» TAROT

85. [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*.

€ 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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1922

THE «LEMBERG PATTERN TYPE II - MOHREN-DEUTSCHE »

86. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Austrian Deck*, Vienna: 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, Oriental European (under Turkish rule), 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. IPCS Website.



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1928

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

87. [GAME]. *Sehr feine Schwerdter-Deutsche No. 93*. S. D. Modiano, Trieste, 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: CATHERINE PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 124, 130, 146; KATHLEEN WOWK. *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, p. 50; SYLVIA MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 100-102.



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1940
THE «DVOUHLAVÉ HRÁČI KARTY PATTERN»

88. [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.

Spain/Portugal/South America



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1850 THE «GARCÍA PATTERN»

89. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Spanish Deck*, Torrecilla de Cameros: Señora Pinillos de Vallejo, ca. 1850.

40/40 cards (88 x 58 mm), hand-coloured woodcuts, four suits of ten cards with the typical Spanish suits. The Four of Cups bears the maker's details: *Fab. de naypes / de la / Sra. Pinillos de Vallejo / Torrecilla de Cam.* Card backs hand-painted in lilac.

€ 1.800

All the cards, as was typical for Spanish decks from the 19th century, display the numbering from 1 to 7 and from 10 to 12 in the upper left corner.

The present deck belongs to the Spanish pattern known as the *García Pattern*. Its distinctive features include:

- Kings have their ankles and feet visible. The King of Cups carries no scepter but holds his suit mark.
- The horse of the *Cavalier of Coins* faces right, while that of the *Cavalier of Batons* turns its head backward.
- Two or more horses are not rearing but have only one hoof raised.
- The Jack of Batons sometimes wears trousers instead of knee-breeches.
- The Jacks of Cups and Coins wear a waist-sash with flowing or hanging ends.
- The hemispherical cups resemble those in the Catalan design.
- The Ace of Coins shows a central wreath enclosing a shield, with a simple ribbon above and below.

RAIMUNDO GARCÍA was a Madrid cardmaker or *factor* whose name became associated with a design that retained its identity throughout much of the nineteenth century. García adopted a practice of subcontracting production to various workshops, so that cards of similar design were manufactured by several makers. These decks bore García's name, and sometimes, as in the present case, also that of the workshop producing them on his behalf.

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; T. DENNING, *Spanish Playing Cards*, p. 54; T. DENNING, *The Playing-Cards of Spain*, pp. 60-62; Fournier, *Spain*, no. 174; IPCS pattern sheet 25.



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1875

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

90. [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 defining characteristics of the *Portuguese* pattern include, distinguishing it from the Spanish and Italian styles, several notable features:

Aces illustrated with dragons or serpents, Court figures depicted in theatrical attire, reflecting Portuguese artistic influences, Kings portrayed in a standing posture, in contrast to early Iberian decks, *Sotas* presented as female characters, thereby reinforcing the distinctiveness of Portuguese card design, the suits of Swords and Clubs rendered as trophies accompanied by shields, while Coins frequently appear as intricate rosettes. A standard deck comprises 48 cards, notably omitting the tens.

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 versions for export frequently portray the *sota* as a crowned queen.
- 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: 1882, 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).

1890
THE «MODERN CATALAN PATTERN»

91. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Spanish Deck*, Barcellona: Camps e Hijos, ca. 1890.

48/48 cards (90 x 54 mm), stencil hand-coloured woodcuts, in four suits of 12 cards each, featuring a typical Spanish suit: 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 verso of the cards is 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; H. R. *République Français*. Librairie Hachette, 1906. IPCS pattern sheet 21.



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1895
THE «COMPAÑÍA GENERAL DE FÓSFOROS» PLAYING CARDS:
INDUSTRIAL MANUFACTURE AND IBERIAN TRADITION
IN LATE 19TH CENTURY ARGENTINA

92. [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

93. [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 Coins 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: Modern Spanish Catalan*, IPCS, 1980s; 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

94. [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.

REFERENCE 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, *Cadiz-Catalan Style Pack by Sebastián Comas, 1896*, The World of Playing Cards, 2010, wopc.co.uk.



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1906

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

95. [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, IPCS, 1980s; 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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1912

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

96. [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; International Playing-Card Society, *Pattern Sheet no. 46: Modern Spanish Catalan*, IPCS, 1980s; 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.

India/Persia

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1850

REDISCOVERING INDIAN «GANJIFA», THE ART OF «MUGHAL» PLAYING DECKS

THE «SAWANTWADI MOGHUL PATTERN»

AN EXQUISITE BLEND OF PERSIAN, ISLAMIC, AND LOCAL TRADITIONS

97. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Mughal Ganjifa*. Maharashtra, Central–Western India: ca. 1850.

A complete deck of 96/96 circular cards (diameter 50 mm), each executed in polychrome with gilt and lacquer decoration on palm leaves. The illustrations depict enthroned maharajas, courtiers, attendants, acrobats, musicians, riders, animal figures (notably tigers), and processional or audience scenes, all set against alternating-coloured grounds in red, black, orange, and green. The reverse of each card bears a distinctive chequered lattice grid filled with clusters of red dots. The cards are housed in a rectangular wooden box (170 × 80 × 80 mm) with a sliding lid. The box is painted in polychrome colours heightened with gold and lacquer; its sides depict courtly processions with camels, elephants, and horses, while one short side features a tiger-hunting scene. The sliding lid is decorated with a courtly interior scene showing a crowned female figure (princess or queen) within a white pavilion conversing with a male courtier, and an enthroned ruler above, with warriors in the foreground. White floral sprays form a decorative border. The deck belongs to the pattern known as the *Sawantwadi Moghul Pattern* (IPCS Sheet 67).

€ 4.800

This rare set follows the classical eight-suited Mughal *ganjifa* system, each suit bearing a distinct emblem symbolizing aspects of sovereignty, wealth, martial strength, and courtly life:

- *Taj* (Crown): emblem of kingship and imperial authority.
- *Safed* (Silver/Moon): lunar cycles and silver currency, linked to the god Chandra.
- *Shamsher* (Sword): the Persian sabre, symbol of military power and the palace guard.
- *Ghulam* (Servants): attendants, musicians, and entertainers, reflecting everyday court life.
- *Chang* (Harp): music and the pleasures of the *zenana*, often depicted with camels or ladies playing instruments.
- *Surkh* (Gold/Sun): solar majesty and gold coinage, with lions or tigers beneath radiant discs.
- *Barat* (Document): chancery and administration, represented by decrees and contracts.
- *Qimash* (Textiles): palace stores, wealth in goods, and the prosperity of the empire.

Each suit contains twelve cards: two court figures (*mir*, or king, and *wazir*, or minister) and ten numeral cards. Together they evoke the hierarchies and functions of the Mughal court, uniting symbols of power, economy, ritual, and entertainment.



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Beyond their gaming use, Mughal *Ganjifa* cards were conceived as miniature artworks, painted by *chitrakars* (court painters and artisans) using rich pigments, gilding, and protective lacquer. Their scale and refinement align them with the traditions of Mughal manuscript illumination and miniature painting, transforming an object of leisure into a durable work of art.

This synthesis of Persian, Islamic, and Indian traditions makes the *Sawantwadi Moghul Pattern* particularly significant. Unlike the later *Hinduised Dashavatara* packs, which adapted the game to Vishnu's incarnations and epic themes, this set remains within the canonical *Mughal* system, intimately connected to the ceremonial and cultural life of the imperial court.

As such, these cards are both instruments of play and reflections of imperial culture, embodying the synthesis of politics, art, and leisure that defined the Mughal world from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.



CONDITIONS: Some craquelures revealing the thickness of the protective lacquer layer applied to the cards; occasional light rubbing and minor surface cracks or chips; overall a fine deck.

REFERENCES: CATHERINE PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 20-30; SYLVIA MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Jonas Verlag, 1990, n. 233-236; RUDOLF VON LEYDEN, *Ganjifa, the playing cards of India*, Victoria & Albert Museum, 1982; KATHLEEN WOWK. *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 113-118; SYLVIA MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 183-184; Schreiber p. 183, n.1; Cary collection, n. 1069-1077; Fournier, pp.327-329.

A similar deck of *Mughal Ganjifa* is present, incomplete (92 cards out of 96), in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 01316&A/(IS):

<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O67538/playing-cards-card-game-unknown/>

An incomplete deck (93 out of 96 cards) of 19th-century Indian *Ganjifa* in their original box was sold by Christie's in 2014 for £7,500 (\$9,500):

<https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5781878> .

1860

A PERSIAN DECK OF HIERARCHIES AND SYMBOLS, A «QAJAR-ERA AS-NAS»:
THE ORIGIN OF THE POKER

98. [PLAYING CARDS]. *As-Nas*. Persia, Qajar dynasty, ca. 1860.

The lot comprises a made-up set of 53 Persian *As-Nās* playing cards (60 × 40 mm), executed in gouache and gold on lacquered card stock. The versos are uniformly coated in black lacquer without decoration. The imagery is hand-painted, with bold outlines, brilliant pigments, and areas of gilding, later sealed beneath a transparent glossy varnish. The figures are depicted within rectangular frames set against plain coloured backgrounds in red, green, yellow, or black. The deck contains multiple examples of the principal *As-Nās* types: lion (ace), seated king, queen, soldier, and dancing girl. The set does not conform to a European-suited pattern but follows the traditional Persian *As-Nās* iconography.

€ 2.500

This group represents a rare survival of the Persian game of *As-Nās*, a card game that flourished in the Qajar courtly milieu and is considered a direct antecedent of poker. The present examples, datable to mid-nineteenth-century Persia, exemplify the opulent miniature painting tradition adapted to a popular gaming format. Their fine condition, variety of subjects, and use of lacquer underscore their value as both artistic objects and historical documents of Qajar sociability.

The present set, rather than a single self-contained twenty-five-card deck, constitutes a larger composite group assembled from various sources. Lions occur four times; queens and dancing girls are particularly well represented with numerous variants, while soldiers and kings likewise appear in repetition with chromatic and stylistic variations. The lion cards show the traditional ramping beast, painted in gold on a dark ground. Kings are depicted enthroned, richly attired, with attributes of sovereignty; queens and female figures appear with goblets or in veiled dress; soldiers wear helmets or plumed caps; dancing girls are shown seated or in motion, recalling Persian miniature traditions. The repetition of figures with minor chromatic and stylistic differences suggests workshop production, yet each card remains individually hand-painted.

CONDITIONS: Very good, with bright and fresh colours, slight craquelure consistent with nineteenth-century lacquer, and minimal surface wear.

REFERENCES: K. WOWK, *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 119-120; M. DUMMETT, *A History of Games Played with the As-Nas Deck*, London: Oxford University Press, 2006; S. LÉVI, *Les cartes à jouer en Orient*, Paris: E. Leroux, 1923.



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1870

POLYCHROME LACQUERED «DASHAVATARA GANJIFA» SET
ILLUSTRATING «MATSYA TO KALKI»

99. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Dashavatara Ganjifa*. Maharashtra or Malwa, Central India: ca. 1870.

Complete set of 120/120 circular playing cards (diameter 65 mm), polychrome-painted and lacquered on wood-pulp board, arranged in ten suits of twelve cards each, comprising two court cards (*raja*, *mantri*) and ten numeral cards. Each suit is marked by its distinct emblem corresponding to one of Vishnu's ten *Avatars*. The ground colours vary between red, green, yellow ochre, and black, each bordered with concentric ruled circles in red, yellow, and black. The set is preserved in its original square wooden lidded box (85 × 95 × 90 mm), decorated with painted figures in profile. The deck belongs to the pattern known as *Dashavatara Ganjifa* (ten-suited Vishnu type, IPCS classification).

€ 3.800

This Dashavatara Ganjifa set offers a rare example of the Hindu adaptation of the *Mughal Ganjifa* tradition. Executed in bright opaque polychromes and simplified yet expressive depictions of Vishnu's avatars, it can be dated to ca. 1870, probably from Maharashtra or Malwa. The style suggests workshop production for Brahmin or aristocratic circles rather than court ateliers, marking the post-Mughal era in which Hinduized ten-suited packs almost replaced the earlier Mughal format. Beyond their use in play, these lacquered cards embodied both devotional significance and refined craftsmanship, testifying to the enduring cultural and religious importance of Ganjifa in 19th-century India.

The Dashavatara Ganjifa system consists of ten suits, each of twelve cards. Two are court cards, *raja* (king), often depicted as the avatara enthroned or in a narrative scene, and *mantri* (minister or wazir), usually mounted on horseback with attributes of service and loyalty, followed by ten numeral cards. Each suit sign represents one avatara of Vishnu, accompanied by detailed iconography and symbolic colouring:

MATSYA (FISH) – The first incarnation, in which Vishnu rescues the Vedas during the primordial flood. KURMA (TORTOISE) – Vishnu supports Mount Mandara during the churning of the ocean to obtain amrita. VARAHA (BOAR) – Vishnu with a boar's head lifts the earth goddess Bhudevi from the depths. Cards may show the combat with Hiranyaksha. Suit signs are boars or conches; greens and yellows predominate. NARASIMHA (MAN-LION) – The fierce avatar slaying the demon Hiranyakashipu, typically shown enthroned, tearing the demon across his knees, with Prahlada nearby. VAMANA (DWARF) – Vishnu as a Brahmin dwarf approaches King Bali, then assumes cosmic proportions in the Trivikrama form. Depicted with umbrella and water-vessel before Bali.



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PARASHURAMA (RAMA WITH AXE) – The Brahmin warrior armed with an axe, shown combating Kartavirya. Suit signs are axes; colours red, yellow, or green. RAMA (HEROIC RAMA WITH BOW) – The royal hero defeating Ravana of Lanka, or enthroned with Sita. KRISHNA (OR JAGANNATHA IN REGIONAL VARIANTS) – Represented as Venugopala playing the flute, slayer of Kamsa, or enthroned with Radha. BUDDHA – Shown seated on a lotus throne, embodying Vishnu's avatara who misleads demons from the Vedas. KALKI (THE FINAL AVATAR) – The eschatological saviour, depicted riding a white or winged horse, or with a horse's head as Hayagriva. The set corresponds with the canonical list of Vishnu's avatars, as confirmed by the handwritten note enclosed with the deck, which lists fishes, turtles, axes, bulls, beans, shells, bows and arrows, mice, and others, echoing traditional suit designations.



CONDITIONS: Minor surface abrasions and occasional pigment losses to a few cards, consistent with age and use; lacquer retains its original sheen. The box shows heavier wear, with flaking and paint losses to the lid and sides, yet remains structurally sound.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 20-30; S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Jonas Verlag, 1990, n. 233-236; R. VON LEYDEN, *Ganjifa, the playing cards of India*, Victoria & Albert Museum, 1982; K. WOWK. *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 113-118; SYLVIA MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 183-184; Schreiber p. 183, n.1; Cary collection, n. 1069-1077; Fournier, pp.327-329.



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1900

FROM COURTLY LUXURY TO POPULAR TRADITION:
A LATE PHASE «MUGHAL GANJIFA» DECK IN BRIGHT POLYCHROMY

THE «SAWANTWADI MOGHUL PATTERN»
AN EXQUISITE BLEND OF PERSIAN, ISLAMIC, AND LOCAL TRADITIONS

100. [PLAYING CARDS]. *Mughal Ganjifa*. Maharashtra or Central India: ca. 1900.

Complete deck of 96 circular cards (diameter 75 mm), executed in opaque polychrome painting with a thin protective lacquer coating. Each card is made of thick pasteboard, painted on one side, with the reverse uniformly plain red. The cards are preserved in modern transparent sleeves. The set belongs to the canonical *Mughal Ganjifa* system: eight suits, each of twelve cards, comprising two court figures (*mir* or king, and *wazir* or minister) and ten numerals.

€ 1.800

The deck represents the *Sawantwadi Moghul Pattern* (IPCS *Sheet 67*). Its vivid palette of red, yellow, green, and black, together with the simplified draughtsmanship, reflects the late phase of *Ganjifa* production (ca. 1880–1910). Though less elaborate than earlier luxury examples, it preserves the symbolic richness of imperial iconography. The eight suits signify sovereignty (*Taj*), lunar and silver cycles (*Safed*), martial strength (*Shamsher*), attendants (*Ghulam*), music (*Chang*), solar wealth (*Surkh*), authority of documents (*Barat*), and textiles (*Qimash*).

Rooted in Persian prototypes and codified under the *Mughal* emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605), the *Ganjifa* system united cosmological, political, and courtly motifs. This deck shows how, even as imperial patronage waned, regional workshops in Maharashtra continued to produce finely painted sets that perpetuated *Mughal* imagery in a more accessible, popular form. It thus embodies both continuity and transformation, a survival of courtly leisure culture translated into modest yet refined artistry, bridging elite pastimes and popular tradition. Rarely preserved complete, such decks remain invaluable witnesses to the diffusion of Mughal visual culture beyond the imperial court.

CONDITIONS: Perfectly preserved.

REFERENCES: C. PERRY HARGRAVE, *A History of playing cards*, Dover publications, 2021, pp. 20-30; S. MANN, *All Cards on the Table*, Jonas Verlag, 1990, n. 233-236; R.F VON LEYDEN, *Ganjifa, the playing cards of India*, Victoria & Albert Museum, 1982; K. WOWK. *Playing Cards of the World*, Lutterworth press, 1983, pp. 113-118; S. MANN, *Collecting Playing cards*, Arco Publications, 1966, pp. 183-184; Schreiber p. 183, n.1; Cary collection, n. 1069-1077; Fournier, pp.327-329.

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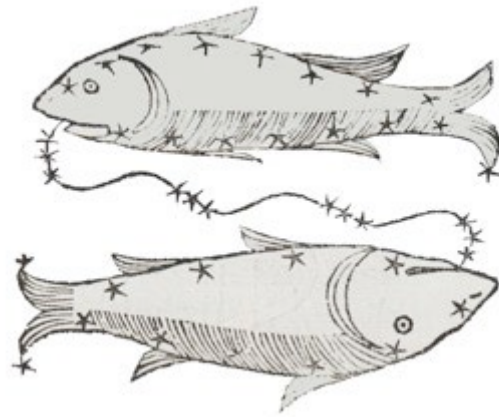
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