



40 playing cards with airplane motif to verso.

CASABLANCA CARDS

[Caravelle]

Author

MALKA FRERES [after CAMOIN]

Publication date

[c1971].

Publisher

Malka Freres,

Publication place

Casablanca,

Physical description

40 playing cards with airplane motif to verso.

Dimensions

86 by 56mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

Notes

The Maker

There are records of a Jewish family named Malka living in Morocco during the twentieth century, who may have been the proprietors of Malka Freres. While their output of cards seems to have been limited to the one Casablanca deck taken from the defunct Camoin firm, they published it multiple

times with different wrappers and boxes.

The Cards

Based on the Spanish National pattern for playing cards designed by Félix Solesio in Madrid at the turn of the nineteenth century, the Casablanca pattern is so-named because it was the standard deck made for import into Morocco and Algeria. French and Spanish manufacturers including La Ducale, B.P. Grimaud and Camoin were at the forefront of these European exports. Using the Spanish suits of clubs, coins, cups and swords, with full-length court cards depicting the sota (jack), caballo (knight) and rey (king), the Casablanca pattern has the French-Catalan style king card, in which the figure wears long robes covering his feet. The pip cards have their values represented by the corresponding number of suit marks, often accompanied by other decorative elements such as flowers.

After the closure of the Camoin firm in 1971, many of its decks were appropriated by various other printers, including Malka Freres in Casablanca. As a Moroccan company, they were able to cater better to their audience by replacing the original French imprints with Arabic. They also removed the publisher's imprints originally found on Camoin's court cards. Otherwise, the design is just the same. Interestingly, the Malka deck was originally issued in a wrapper advertising the Caravella aircraft, which also appears as a design on the verso of each card. The French jet airliner, which flew between Paris-Orly and Casablanca Airport during the latter-half of the twentieth century, sadly became infamous for a number of fatal crashes in the 1970s.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £300

Inventory reference: 21527