



54 chromolithograph cards, with tax stamp on Ace of Clubs, with green pattern to verso, with original paper booklet, housed in original box.

MADemoiselle LE NORMAND'S DIVINATION DECK

Grand Jeu de Mlle Normand

Author

[Anonymous]

Publication date

1845

Publisher

B.P. Grimaud, Chartier Marteau & Boudin,

Publication place

Paris,

Physical description

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Dimensions

128 by 90mm (5 by 3.5 inches).

Notes

The Maker

Renowned French bookseller, necromancer, fortune-teller and cartomancer, Marie Anne Le Normand, rose to considerable fame during the Napoleonic era. It is believed that she issued

premonitions of death to Marat, Robespierre and Saint-Just, and that Empress Joséphine and Napoleon Bonaparte consulted with her. There is no indication that Mademoiselle Le Normand actually designed or used the present cards, but her name no doubt lent a certain mystique to the deck. They were published in 1845 by the firms of B.P. Grimaud and Chartier Marteau & Boudin in Paris. B.P. Grimaud & Cie. was founded in 1848 as a small playing card factory in Paris, producing decks on a range of themes and subjects. The firm continued to prosper throughout the subsequent century, and in 1962 was bought by a larger company, Ducale-France Cartes. Marteau & Boudin was a manufacturers based at 54 Rue de Lancry which generally worked in association with Grimaud.

The Cards

Characterised by a complex suite of mythological, astrological and alchemical iconography, the Grand Jeu de Mlle Lenormand is designed as a tool for divination. Each card has a central image with two or three smaller illustrations beneath it, which are to be interpreted by the user. The images are based on a variety of themes including the stars, Greek mythology, botany, the alphabet or the standard playing cards. The Eight of Spades, for example, has a miniature version of the card itself in the upper left-hand corner, a bold black “M” on the opposite side; the main image shows Achilles dragging the body of Hector around the walls of Troy, with a certain constellation adorning the skies above. Beneath this are three further images of a tombstone, a small bouquet of simple flowers, and a skull and cross-bones. The accompanying booklet, entitled ‘Grand Jeu de société et pratiques secrètes de Mlle Le Normand’, provides some interpretations of the elements shown and explains how the deck can be used for “past-present-future fortune-telling”. The same deck of cards was also published in Great Britain under the title ‘Grand Jeu Lenormand Astro Mythological Cards’.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £2000

Inventory reference: 20735