





The Winner Takes it All

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The Winner Takes it All

The Jean Verame Collection of playing cards

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Introduction

“With every shuffle and deal, I felt the hand of fate herself, unseen and unrelenting”

Robert Louis Stevenson

Small pieces of paper can have a big impact. A ballot placed in a box, a phone number scribbled on a scrap, or a cheque made out and torn from its stub, have the power to communicate messages, represent value, and effect change on the lives of those around them. The same can be said of playing-cards: a deck of cards is a set of symbols representing a range of values and categories. With them, not only can games and fortunes be won or lost, but information conveyed, status indicated, products promoted and lessons taught.

From satire (item 17) to propaganda (item 143), many of the decks in these pages take on overtly political positions, while illustrations on others reveal much about the fashion (item 77), entertainment (item 75), and events (item 84) of the day. For many cards, their utility at the table has been subordinated to other purposes, such as advertising (item 108) or teaching (item 6). Indeed, the educational value of cards is further demonstrated in the unique examples of bureaux typographiques (items 145, 146 and 147) included in the Verame collection.

The importance of playing-cards is further evidenced by the vast collection of official acts and edicts also presented here (items 155-162). Issued by kings, emperors, dukes and popes, most often to tax or otherwise regulate gambling, these documents attest to the enduring universal popularity of playing-cards, which do not discriminate between class, place, age or era.

Daniel Crouch Rare Books is proud to present a collection of playing-cards and related items that are a store of artistic, political, industrial and cultural history spanning seven centuries and five continents. These palm-sized pieces of paper have the power to enrich, educate, advertise or entertain. The artistic and technical innovations of the generations of card-makers represented here have ensured that, even if you get dealt a bad hand, you are still holding good cards.

Biography



Artist, author and collector, Jean Verame was born in 1936 in the Belgian city of Ghent. Since childhood, his powerful visual sensibilities have drawn him to the visual arts in all media. His work in vast natural landscapes, from painting a thousand stones along the beaches of the French Riviera in 1965, to composing a vibrant geoglyph in the Atacama Desert in 2017, has earned him the nickname “Painter of the Deserts”. His interests in the plastic arts, painting, illustration and engraving are brought together in another of his greatest passions: playing-cards.

What started at the age of 15, when Verame spotted a deck of cards at a flea market that seemed quite different from those his parents used at home and, intrigued, bought them with the five francs he had to his name, gradually became the world’s largest privately-held collection of playing-cards and associated paraphernalia, acquired over the course of seven decades. At times, the hobby turned into an obsession (“I almost had a heart attack when I saw it. My heart started beating and my only concern was that it wouldn’t show”) which came with its ups (“the price he told me almost made me shout with joy, he was asking for almost nothing”) and downs (“...the bids for the deck rose up to three times the estimated price. A cold sweat wrapped around my forehead, and I froze, astounded. I had just realised I was but an amateur”).

Through all the highs and lows of collecting, Verame dedicated himself to the research of rare and antique cards, publishing a number of books on the subject: ‘Les Merveilleuses Cartes a Jouer du XIXe Siècle’; ‘Les Très Beaux Objets du Jeu; Sublimes cartes á jouer’. In 1991 Verame was offered an opportunity to unleash his creativity into the world of playing-cards when Air France commissioned a deck of cards for its elite flagship Concorde. Fifteen years later he published another deck, inspired by the theme of genesis and beginnings, which unites many of his earlier projects.

Verame’s two passions have flourished together: his work, experience and intuitive understanding as an artist have directed his collecting, and the huge array of playing-cards he has examined and acquired has nourished his creative output.

Glossary



Court cards

The court cards, picture cards, or face cards, are the highest-value cards in a deck apart from the Aces. They are typically represented as a King, Queen and Jack in each suit, although this can vary from system to system.

French system

The French system has been widely adopted as the standard format of a 52-card deck. It uses the familiar four suits of Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts and Spades, and three court cards of King (Roi), Queen (Dame) and Jack (Valet). Under the French system there were many regional variants, the most dominant being the Paris pattern. The Paris pattern was published in the form of both a 52-card and 32-card deck, the latter with the pip cards from Two to Six omitted.

German system

The German system is one of the earliest distinct European systems, having emerged in the mid-fifteenth century. The four suits are represented by Acorns, Bells, Hearts and Leaves; it was from these that the more common French system developed. The court cards show a King (König), Knave (Ober) and Under-Knave (Unter), and its Ace cards (Daus) are valued not as One, but as Two, meaning that the standard deck had 48 cards. In some variants, this was further reduced by the removal of the Three, Four and Five, perhaps due to paper shortages.

Italian system

The Italian system was developed in the northeastern region around Venice during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It consists of 52 cards, but some of the local variants that emerged in other areas omit the Eights, Nines and Tens, leaving only 40 cards. The most common Italian deck uses the four suits of Clubs, Coins, Cups and Swords, which also feature in the Spanish system. The majority of Italian decks have three court cards consisting of a King (Re), Knight (Cavallo) and Knave (Fante), although tarocchi decks also include an additional Queen (Regina or Donna) between the Knight and King.

Jass

Played with a 36-card deck, Jass is considered the national Swiss card game. Players compete in pairs to be the first to score a designated number of points, winning tricks by playing the highest-ranking or trump card. Popular throughout German-speaking regions, there are thought to be over 70 variants of the game.

Pip cards

Pip cards, or number cards, refer to the cards in a deck which represent a numerical value from two to ten in a standard 52-card deck. They are known as pip cards because of the ‘pips’ on the front of each card: the small, easily-countable symbols that correspond to its value. Some pip cards also show a Roman or Arabic numeral to clarify the value.

Shoe

A card shoe, or dealer’s shoe, is a storage device used to house multiple decks of cards. Playing-cards can be stored flat in separate compartments to prevent damage, loss or tampering.

Spanish system

The Spanish system is similar to the Italian system, in that it uses the four suits of Clubs, Coins, Cups and Swords. It also uses the three court cards of King (Rey), Knight (Caballo) and Knave (Sota), but again some decks contain an additional Queen (Reina). Although it is thought that the decks introduced into Spain during the Moorish invasion consisted of 52 cards, the removal of the Tens at some point in the fifteenth or sixteenth century leaves the standard Spanish deck with only 48 cards. A particularly popular game named Ombre uses an even more reduced deck of 40 cards, with the Eights and Nines omitted.

Suit marks

The suit marks, also known as ‘pips’, refer to the symbols used to represent the various suits. In the standard French system, this means the familiar forms of Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts and Spades, but in other variations, they are represented by Acorns, Bells, Coins, Cups, Leaves and Swords.

Tarot

Tarot cards emerged in western Europe during the mid-fifteenth century for use in specific games such as Italian tarocchini, French tarot and Austrian Königrufen. The decks varied in size between reduced 22-card decks and expanded decks of 78 cards. In the eighteenth century, tarot cards began to be used for cartomancy, the attempts to divine one’s future or fortune by selecting and analysing cards.

Transformation deck

Transformation decks, which emerged in the nineteenth century, are innovations on the traditional pip cards. The artist incorporates the card’s suit marks into its design, thus ‘transforming’ them into part of the image. This often makes for questionable results, with strangely spade- shaped faces or bodies modelled in the form of the club symbol.

Trappola

Trappola is a card game that emerged in Venice during the sixteenth century and subsequently became popular across Europe. Played with an Italian deck, the game uses only 36 cards, with the pip cards from Three to Six omitted. The game fell out of fashion in the twentieth century, with the last known deck published in 1948.

Value

Quite straightforwardly, the value of each card refers to what it is worth in any given game. The pip cards are fairly self-explanatory, as they each represent a number, while the court cards rely on the shared understanding of rank to convey their value. It is common knowledge, for example, that the King ranks higher than the Queen, who in turn ranks higher than a Jack. Although their value is technically one (or two in the German system), the Ace cards are generally held as the most valuable card in the deck.

Wrapper

Playing-cards were originally packaged in paper wrappers, which would be folded around the cards and then sealed, often with a pasted sheet on which the tax stamp could be applied by the relevant authorities.

Fifteenth-century uncut cards

1 DE DALE, Jean
[Fifteenth-century French cards].

Publication
[Lyon, Jean de Dale, c1480].

Description
20 bistre-printed woodcut playing-cards,
on two uncut sheets, tears skilfully repaired.

Dimensions
Sheet 1: 207 by 300mm (8.25 by 11.75 inches).
Sheet 2: 207 by 298mm (8.25 by 11.73 inches).
Each card: 92 by 50mm (3.62 by 1.97 inches).

References
Bouchot, H. (1903). A Newly-Discovered
Pack of Lyonnese Playing-Cards (1470),
The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs;
'Revue d'histoire de Lyon' (1906), A. Rey et
Cie; Verame (2007) p45.

A mysterious figure in the history of playing-cards, Jean de Dale was likely a cardmaker of the fifteenth century based in Lyon, whose decks contributed to the standardisation of playing-cards in the French style. His signature appears on the banner found on the lower left-hand card of the two uncut sheets present here. Scholars have placed de Dale's active years variously between 1450 to 1480 and 1485 to 1515, at which time there were a number of manufacturers active in Lyon.

The face cards on the present uncut sheets, which are full-length depictions of courtly figures, do not clearly display their suits. It is likely that the suit marks were not printed but rather painted in the upper-corners of the cards after cutting.

Each row has two female figures, both wearing crowns, and three male, two of whom are crowned. There are certain French-suited tarot decks, namely the Tarot de Paris and Cinquevalet, that include five court cards - the king, queen, knight, jack and maid - but they are rarely found in the Lyon pattern. It therefore appears that the present sheets probably represent a preparatory stage in playing-card production where, for efficiency's sake, ten court cards would be printed per single sheet. Across six such sheets, there would thus be produced the full cohort of court cards required for five decks. The next stages would involve hand-painting and then cutting the cards.



The World

2 [ANONYMOUS after BEMBO, Bonifacio]

[Il Mondo].

Publication
[Lombardy, c1500].

Description
Tempera and gold leaf on thick card, verso painted red.

Dimensions
179 by 88mm (7 by 3.5 inches).

References
Waite, A.E. (1910) The Pictorial Key to the Tarot; Kaplan, S. The Encyclopedia of Tarot, vols. I and 2, Stamford, CT, U.S. Games Systems, 1986.

The present card is based on a design found in the Visconti-Sforza Tarot decks (see item 125) commissioned in the mid-fifteenth century for the Duke of Milan and made by Brescian artist Bonifacio Bembo. Along with cards representing the virtues of faith, hope and charity, and the King, Queen, Knight and Jack court cards, the Visconti-Sforza Tarot contains a card showing an illustration of “New Jerusalem”, flanked by two winged putti. Known as the ‘World’ card, the design references St. John’s vision in the book of Revelation, in which he “saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband” (Rev. 21:2).

This card, along with the rest of the deck, was reproduced several times in the subsequent years, with the present example having been executed with sumptuous gold-leaf overlay by a slightly later Lombard cardmaker around 1500. With Justice, the King of Cups and the Eight of Coins, it is one of four cards that make up the Bonomi Group, one of the fifteen groups of Visconti-Sforza Tarot cards identified by Kaplan.



Sixteenth century woodblock cards

3 JV

[Woodblock Lyon cards].

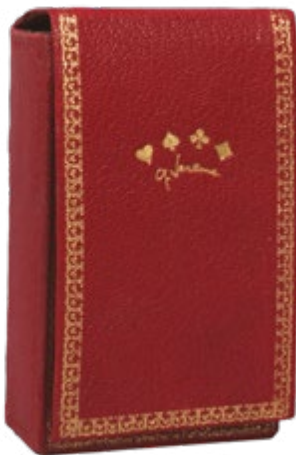
Publication
[Lyon, sixteenth century].

Description
47 woodblock cards with original hand-colour, versos blank, without the Nine of Hearts and Spades, and the Ten of Diamonds, Hearts, and Clubs.

Dimensions
97 by 57mm (3.75 by 2.25 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p13.

Early woodblock playing-cards made in Lyon during the sixteenth century, with the initials “JV” on the Jack of Clubs. There were many patterns and variants of patterns that emerged in France during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with Lyon, a hub of cardmaking, producing three or more distinct variations. These cards fall into the Lyons 2 pattern, which is characterised by features such as youthful Kings, specific clothing worn by the Queen cards, and particular poses on the Jacks, including the sauntering Jack of Clubs with his hand on his hip.



Sixteenth-century uncut cards

4 LE CORNU, Anthoine

[Sixteenth-century Rouen cards].

Publication
[Rouen, Anthoine Le Cornu, c1550].

Description
20 woodblock playing-cards, manuscript
annotation to central card, on one uncut
sheet, laid on Japan paper, some small
tears with minor loss to image, small stains
in lower margin.

Dimensions
386 by 290mm (15.25 by 11.5 inches).
Each card: 90 by 58mm.

Born in the sixteenth century, Anthoine Le Cornu belonged to a prominent family of Rouen, France. Among the many trade guilds of the city was one dedicated to cardmaking, to which Le Cornu belonged. It is thought that his parents may have sent him to be apprenticed to one of the leading firms of the day in order to gain entrance to one of the city’s most significant trades. Indeed, medieval Rouen was a centre of playing-card production, exporting decks of cards so prolifically that the Rouen pattern was soon adopted as the standard English pattern.

The Rouen pattern consists of the four now-familiar suits of Spades, Hearts, Clubs and Diamonds, with three court cards in each: King, Queen and Jack. One King usually wields an axe and, typically, the artist’s name appears on the Jack of Clubs, who holds a large standing arrow.

On the present sheet, Le Cornu’s name is indeed found with an arrow-bearing Jack, but rather interestingly, there are 20 cards on the present sheet, three male court figures and two females to each row, and there is no suit symbol, presumably as they would later be hand-painted in. It seems therefore that the present sheet represents a preparatory stage in playing-card production where, for efficiency’s sake, 20 court cards would be printed per single sheet. Across three such sheets, there would thus be produced the full cohort of court cards required for five decks. The next stages would involve hand-painting and then cutting the cards.



Sixteenth century hand-painted, uncut cards

5 OISIZET, Jaques

[Sixteenth-century Dauphiné cards].

Publication
[probably Lyon, Jaques Oisizet, c1600].

Description
20 woodblock playing-cards, with original hand-colour, on one uncut sheet, some tears skilfully conserved.

Dimensions
430 by 297mm (17 by 11.75 inches).
Each card: 92 by 59mm.

A coloured, uncut sheet for a deck that has long-proved obscure in the history of card making. While the Jacks have banners bearing the name “Jaques Oisizet”, there is no other record of a cardmaker with this name, and indeed, hardly any records at all of such a surname. The court cards on the sheet are full-length figures depicting the typical King, Queen and Jack; suits are shown by a pip painted into the upper right-hand corner of each. In style they are most similar to the Dauphiné pattern manufactured in Lyon during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and are likely to have been manufactured during the late-sixteenth century.

The sheet represents a preparatory stage in playing-card production where, for efficiency’s sake, 20 court cards would be printed per single sheet. Across three such sheets, there would thus be produced the full cohort of court cards required for five decks. Here, there are two full sets of each of the court cards for the black suits, and two sets of Kings and Queens for each of the reds. As the cards have already been painted by hand, the next stage would involve cutting the cards.



Queens for a king

6 [DESMARETS, Jean]

Jeu des Reynes Renommées.

Publication
Paris, Henry le Gras, [1644].

Description
53 etched playing-cards, including title-card, versos blank, without all sevens, one five, one eight, one nine, one card trimmed to image at left margin.

Dimensions
93 by 57mm (3.75 by 2.25 inches).

A true Renaissance man, Jean Desmarets, Sieur de Saint-Sorlin, was a writer, actor, poet, inventor and the last jester of the royal Court of France. Combining the final two roles, he designed four sets of playing-cards for the young Louis XIV with different educational themes, namely the kings of France, geography, fables and, as here, notable queens from around the world. He produced the decks in collaboration with Stefano della Bella, a printmaker of Florence, and French publisher Henri le Gras.

The present deck consists of 52 cards, each showing a different mythological, historical or contemporary female ruler. Included among them are Queen Anne of Austria, Louis’s mother who was then serving as regent until the young King came of age. She is shown driving with her two sons in a chariot pulled by unicorns, with the caption: “Queen of France, Holy, Wise, of a wonderful goodness, and of a modesty equal to her greatness. Granddaughter of Emperors, daughter and heart of two great Kings, wife of an even greater one and always victorious, and mother of a King who has given his vows, who will surpass all the Kings of the world”. Among the other women on the cards are Hecuba, Queen of Troy, Catherine de Medici, and Esther.

The plates for all four of Desmarets’s decks eventually came into the hands of Florent Le Compte, who added suit symbols to the cards but did not remove le Gras’ imprint from the title card. The present deck is an example of one of the original le Gras publications, lacking pip marks.



Brocade cards

7 [ANONYMOUS]

[Brocade].

Publication
[Germany, seventeenth century].

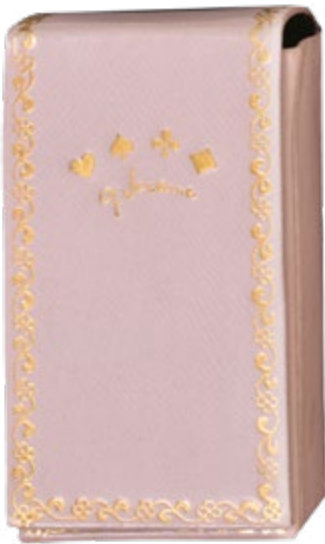
Description
36 silk, cloth, and gouache sheets with openwork design, heightened in gold, all edges gilt, versos blank; housed in a later baby pink leather case, decorated in gilt and blind.

Dimensions
80 by 42mm (3.25 by 1.75 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p65-66.

The present cards are uniquely luxurious, each one being comprised of layers of coloured silk and brocade laid between two sheets of paper. The different layers of fabric give the images added depth, which reinforces the sense of meticulous craftsmanship. The court cards depict full-length royal figures from various parts of the world. The ornate number cards have their pips incorporated into a floral design, with Spades, Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs flowering off of branches.

While there is no information about its maker, the nature of the materials used for this deck demonstrate that he or she must have been working for some extremely wealthy clients. Furthermore, the janiform eagle, which had been a symbol of the Holy Roman emperors since the fifteenth century, points towards a Germanic origin for these cards. Indeed, there are two other sets of silk cards from the seventeenth century with very similar designs, which also appear to have been made in Germany.





Silver playing-cards from seventeenth century Peru

8 [ANONYMOUS]

[Silver playing-cards].

Publication
[Peru, seventeenth century].

Description
40 engraved silver playing-cards, versos
blank, housed in a later Russian tan leather
case, gilt design.

Dimensions
74 by 47mm (3 by 1.75 inches).

From 1542 to 1824, Peru was a Spanish possession, with the colonial authorities mobilising local labour to expand mining in the region. Throughout the seventeenth century, precious metals passed through the new capital of Lima in vast quantities on route to Europe. In fact, the richest silver mines in the Americas were located in the Viceroyalty of Peru, which soon became the source of the majority of silver on the world market.

In addition to guns, germs and steel, European explorers had brought playing-cards with them when they first came to the New World. Spanish colonialists who settled or traded in Peru produced sets of cards from local materials, including silver. Although abundant, the metal was nonetheless greatly valuable, and so silver playing-cards would certainly have been a status symbol and a rarity. In fact, only three examples are known to have survived. One is held by the Museum of the Americas in Madrid, and one at the Playing Card Museum in Vitoria, Spain; the other is the present example.

Illustrations incorporating the pips of the traditional Spanish suits - Clubs, Coins, Cups and Swords - are engraved on the fine sheets of silver, and the court cards depict full-length male figures representing the Sota (jack), Caballo (knight) and Rey (king). The Ace of Coins shows a janiform eagle with the shield of the Crown of Castile (1230-1716) at its centre.





The philosopher’s cards

9 BARBEY, Pierre

[Natural History].

Publication
[Beauvais, c1650].

Description
41 woodblock playing-cards with original hand-colour, versos blank, without eleven cards, some worming, right margins strengthened at an early date.

Dimensions
84 by 49mm (3.25 by 2 inches).

Jesuit philosopher Pierre Barbey, or Barbey, taught at Beauvais college and wrote two books on Aristotelian philosophy. His primary concern as a thinker was to develop a system of interpreting the world based on principles of natural philosophy. In this vein, he produced a naturalist card game around 1650 with four new and apt suits: Birds, Mammals, Plants and Flowers. The full-length figures on the court cards are labelled as characters such as Charlemagne (King of Spades) and “La Princesse” (Queen of Hearts). The Jack of Hearts is captioned “Rude Espeyes”, the meaning of which remains obscure.



Heraldic playing-cards

10 [FINÉ, Claude Oronce]

[Jeu d'Armoiries des Souverains et Etats d'Europe pour apprendre le Blason, la Geographie, et l'Histoire curieuse].

Publication
[Lyon, Benoit Coral, 1689].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
88 by 55mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

Possibly one of the most widely-copied seventeenth century decks of playing-cards is the heraldic deck made by Claude Oronce Finé de Brianville in 1659. The cards bear the coats-of-arms of Europe's royal and aristocratic families, along with text that explains and describes them in French. The Prince of Spades, for example, shows the English Royal family represented by the Order of the Garter, one of the oldest orders of the knighthood in Europe. The order's motto of "Honi soit qui mal y pense" (shame on those who think ill of it) is prominently displayed around the crest. The value of each card is contained within a suit mark in the upper left-hand corner.

Many editions of the deck were published, and can be identified by the Papal coat-of-arms displayed on the King of Clubs. The present deck shows the coat-of-arms of Pope Innocent XI, who served as head of the Catholic Church between 1676 and 1689. The deck is thus an example of the sixth edition published in 1689 by Benoit Coral in Lyon.



Provence pattern

11 PAYEN, J[ean]

[Provence pattern cards].

Publication
Avignon, J. Payen, [1695].

Description
52 miniature woodblock playing-cards with original hand-colour, versos blank, original publisher's decorative paper wrapper.

Dimensions
76 by 49mm (3 by 2 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p59.

Four generations of Payens produced cards in Avignon from 1694 until 1789, publishing a range of decks including tarots as well as traditional playing-cards, as here. Bearing the inscription “J. Payen” on the Jack of Clubs and Jack of Diamonds, they are the work of the elder Jean Payen who established the firm at the end of the seventeenth century. The 52 cards in the deck consist of full-length court cards in the Provence pattern, and number cards displaying the relevant number of pip marks. Characteristics of the Provence pattern include the King of Hearts holding a crowned bird, the King of Spades in profile and the Queens, apart from Diamonds, smelling flowers. Unlike other French patterns, the figures on the court cards are not named.



Provence pattern

12 PAYEN, J[ean]

[Provence pattern cards].

Publication
Avignon, J. Payen, [1695].

Description
52 miniature woodblock playing-cards with
original hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
76 by 48mm (3 by 2 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p59.

A further example of Jean Payen's miniature deck of playing-cards in the Provence pattern. For a description of the cards and their maker, see item 11.



The exotic and the absurd

13 GOLE, J.

[Dutch characters cards].

Publication
Amsterdam, J. Gole, [c1700].

Description
51 engraved playing-cards printed in black and red, hexagon and sun pattern to versos, without the Seven of Clubs.

Dimensions
88 by 57mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p155.; In de kaart gekeken, p23.

Jacob Gole, son of the esteemed French cabinet-maker Pierre Gole, was a Dutch draftsman, engraver and publisher who was best-known for his portraits. It is known that he lived in Amsterdam - from 1686-1689 in the Nieuwe Vijzelstraat, and from 1694-1724 in the Leidenstraat. Over the course of his career, he engraved and printed portraits of highly influential figures, including Pope Innocent XI, Louis XIV and Rembrandt. Around the turn of the century, Gole published several decks of playing-cards featuring various comic, historic and allegorical figures. The Ace of Clubs, King of Spades and Ace of Diamonds in the present deck bear his imprint: “J. Gole exc. cum Priviegio Ordin. Hollan. et West Frisiæ”.

Each of the 52 cards in the deck presents a full-length figure of an interesting character, focusing on the exotic and the absurd. For instance, a native American ruler is depicted as the King of Spades, while on the Ace of Hearts a clown stands above a large pile of excrement, with a caption reading “stootje daar niet aan” (don’t touch that).



Arithmetic cards

14 WARTER, W[illia]m

A Pack of Cards Curiously Engrave'd on Copper-plates, wherein ye Principall Rules of Vulgar Arithmetick are truly stated...

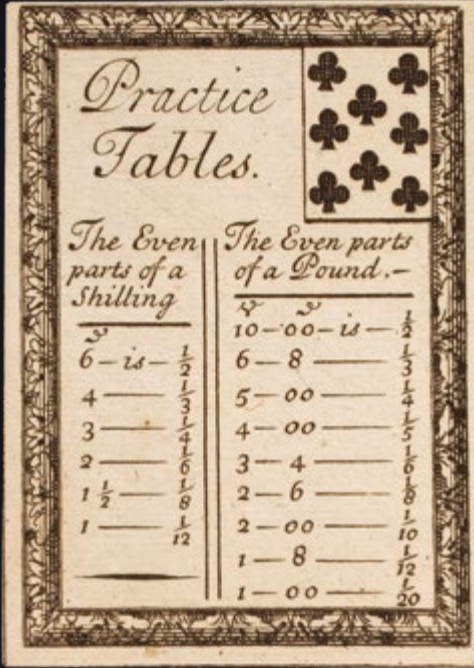
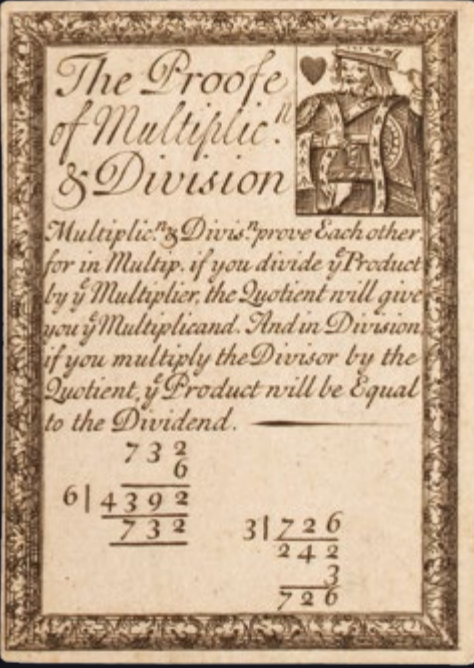
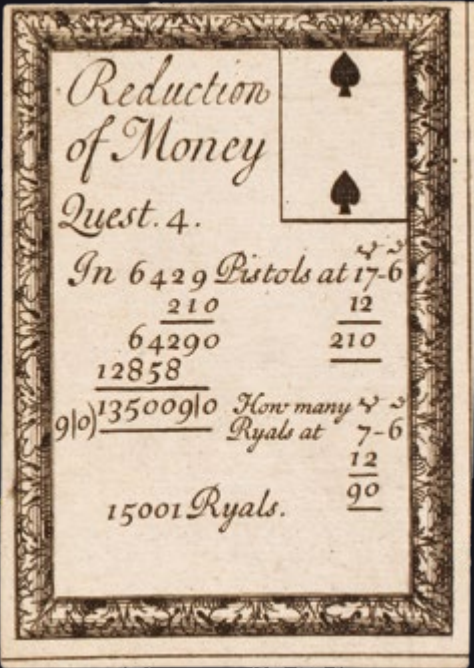
Publication
London, W[illia]m Warter, [1707].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards, versos blank, with original publisher's decorative paper wrapper.

Dimensions
89 by 64mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

London stationer William Warter sold playing-cards from his premises on Fleet Street from the 1670s until 1708 or 1709, when the business was taken over by his prolific apprentice John Lenthall. His decks often feature decorative, political or educational illustrations, with the present deck designed to teach arithmetic.

The four suits cover various topics, with the Spades discussing conversions between different systems, Hearts multiplication and division, Diamonds adding and subtracting, and Clubs providing practice questions. These are generally highly practical, asking students to calculate the price of different goods given their weights and rates. In the upper right-hand corner of each card is a miniature example of the traditional card, and the whole design is set within the decorative framework that characterised Warter's decks.



Love cards

15 [LENTHALL, John]

[Love cards, or the intrigues and amusements of that passion merrily display'd].

Publication
[London, John Lenthall, c1715].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards, hand-colour in part to Eight of Diamonds, versos blank, old glue stains.

Dimensions
95 by 60mm (3.75 by 2.25 inches).

Apprenticed to London stationer William Warter from 1699, John Lenthall, took over the business in 1708 or 1709 and began to re-issue a large number of playing-cards from the previous decades. In fact, in the first half of the eighteenth century, Lenthall was responsible for the production of at least 40 sets of playing-cards, which were generally imported, re-engraved or re-issued editions of earlier decks. They covered a broad range of themes, from politics to romance, as here.

On each of the cards in the present deck a detailed scene is illustrated, with two lines of rhyming verse beneath serving as a caption. The Five of Diamonds shows a man entering a woman's bedchamber, with the verse below reading: "Madam that easy Posture, that soft look; revives my fire, and all my pangs provoke". The court cards are not clearly distinguished from the pip cards by subject, although the Queen cards always show at least one female figure. The Jack of Spades shows a maiden and a satyr dancing in a field, with the caption "Wee'l merrily dance and sportfully play: And kiss the tedious hours away". The value and suit of each card is indicated by a miniature representation of the full card in the upper left-hand corner, the court cards with a three-quarter length figure of the Jack, Queen or King.



Kings of France

16 [GOLE, Jacob]
[Kings of France cards].

Publication
[Amsterdam, Jacob Gole, c1720].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards in black and
bistre, moon pattern to versos, some lightly
stained.

Dimensions
87 by 56mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p154-5.

Dutch draftsman Jacob Gole published several decks of playing-cards in the early-eighteenth century, including the present deck, which depicts Kings of France on the number cards and Aces, ancient Roman figures on the King and Queen cards, and characters from commedia dell'arte as the Jacks. The court card characters are illustrated as full-length figures, with the Romans described beneath in French. The number cards have circular bust portraits of one or two French kings, with the dates of their reign and a summary of their acts as king. For example, the Eight of Hearts shows Henry III and describes how the king faced numerous revolts until his assassination in 1589, upon which the reign of the house of Valois-Angoulême was brought to an end.



Reactionary cards

17 WAANREGT, Pieter

Nieuwe Constitutie Kaart van 's Paussen gewaande onfeilbaarheid gestigt op dolheid en blindheid.

Publication
[Amsterdam,] Pieter Waanregt, [1720].

Description
54 engraved playing-cards, including two title-cards, blue pattern to verso.

Dimensions
82 by 47mm (3.25 by 1.75 inches).

In 1713, Pope Clement XI issued a papal bull condemning Jansenism, a theological movement that attempted to reconcile the concepts of free will and divine grace. The Pope’s proclamation labelled Jansenist doctrines “false, captious, ill-sounding, offensive to pious ears, scandalous, pernicious, rash...”. Whether himself a Jansenist or simply a defender of religious freedom, Dutch printer Pieter Waanregt published the present deck of cards mocking the bull and the concept of papal infallibility (“Paussen gewaande onfeilbaarheid”).

Each of the 52 cards in the deck shows a scene captioned with a satirical rhyming couplet. For example the Ten of Hearts depicts the Pope holding up a church, at the door of which a snake is hissing; the caption below reads “The Mouth and Lust for Power gives the church here in compulsion / The Pope who tests the heart of the truth with a snake”. In fact, the stories and scenes shown on the individual playing-cards form three continuous plots, concerning papal wealth, papal power, and the Jansenist movement.



Economic crisis cards

18 BOMBARIST, Lawrens

April-Kaart of Kaartspel van Momus Naar de Nieuwste Mode.

Publication [Amsterdam, Lawrens Bombarist, 1721].

Description 54 engraved playing-cards, including title-card and introductory-card, the latter with an additional pasted sheet to verso, versos blank.

Dimensions 84 by 48mm (3.25 by 2 inches).

These playing-cards were originally printed in a remarkable publication, entitled ‘Groote tafereel der dwaasheid’, or ‘The Great Mirror of Folly’, and probably published in Amsterdam in 1720. Consisting of two folio volumes, the work included satirical engravings, plays, poems, maps and essays about the crashes that had recently roiled the English, French, American and Dutch economies. These cards are found in the first volume. On the title card, a man holds up a cloth reading ‘April-Kaart, of, Kaart Spel van Momus Naar de Nieuwste Mode’ (‘April Cards, or a Card Game from Momus to the Latest Fashion’). Momus was the god of blame and mockery.

Each card shows a different vignette representing some of most ludicrous episodes of financial speculation that had taken place in the preceding months and years. The King of Hearts, for instance, shows John Law, the Scottish economist whose theories about the value of money ended up running the French economy into the ground, when his infamous Mississippi Bubble exploded. Law’s scheme was soon followed by a similar affair in Britain, known as the South Sea Bubble, which falsely promised investors unrivalled trading rights in South America. Such schemes are personified on the Ten of Hearts by a man blowing bubbles, and one of their victims is presented on the Seven of Hearts, as a man in a dressing-gown examining his heavenly assets with a cross-staff while a dog runs off with a paper reading “Lucht Schat” (‘Treasures of the Sky’).

Accompanying each image are two lines of verse ridiculing the follies shown. In this way, the cards are very similar to a deck published in London by John Bowles shortly before, and many of the ideas may have been sourced directly from Bowles’ publication. The text on the extra card, which shows a large rooster, reads “Dese fyne Modese Kaarten worden gemaakt to Schothanenburg bij Lawrens Bombarist inde wroetende droom goud-mijn graver” (“These fine modest cards are made...by Lawrens Bombarist...”). No other works published under the name of Lawrens Bombarist seem to survive.



Rouen-Brussels tarot

19 [DE HAUTOT, Adam C.]

[Rouen-Brussels tarot].

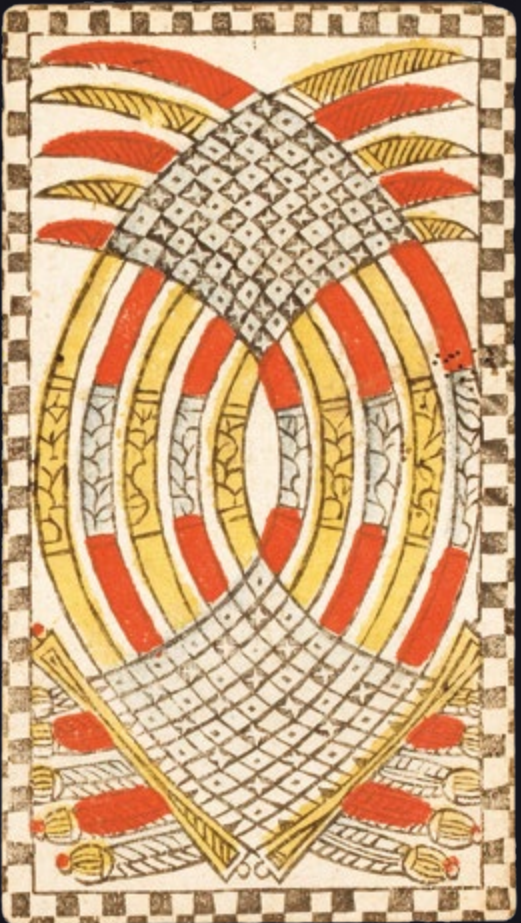
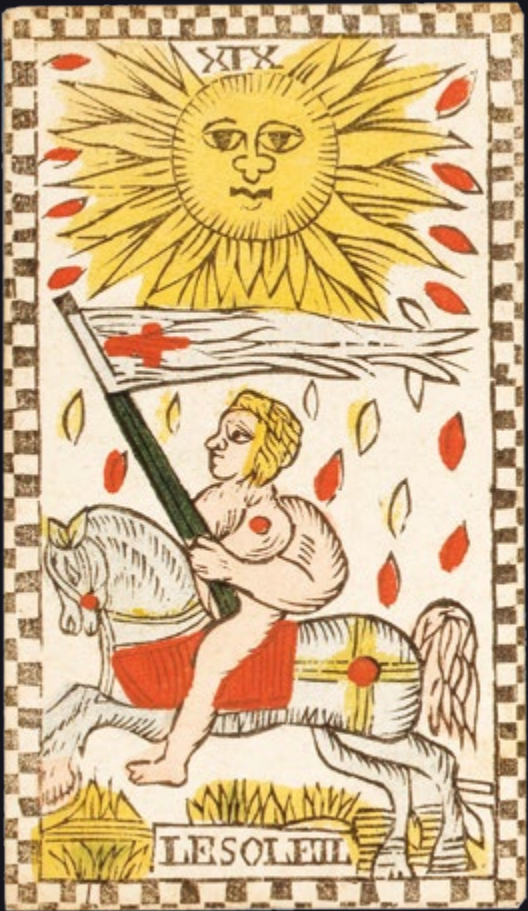
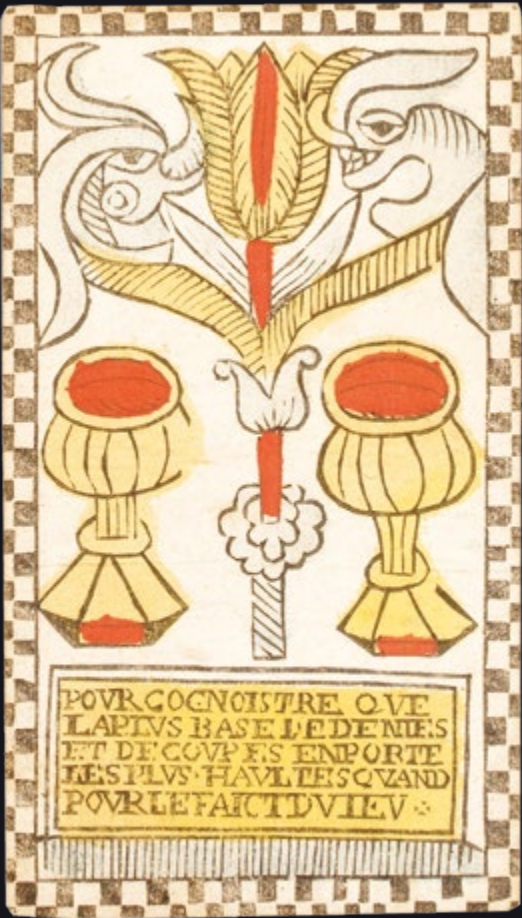
Publication
[Rouen, de Hautot, c1725].

Description
40 woodblock tarot and playing-cards with original hand-colour, decorative design printed in black on versos.

Dimensions
123 by 70mm (4.75 by 2.75 inches).

The Rouen-Brussels tarot pattern was popular in Europe during the late-seventeenth century and for most of the eighteenth. One of the most important cardmakers in this tradition was Adam C. de Hautot; unfortunately, all three generations of de Hautot cardmakers were named Adam, making the present deck difficult to identify. However, the original wrapper in which the cards were sold bore the words “au coeur royal”, which was associated with the maker active between 1723 and 1748, who produced these types of tarot between 1723 and 1728. Based on the Tarot de Marseille, de Hautot replaced or modified several cards, with the Pope and Popess trumps replaced by ones showing Bacchus and a Spanish captain.

In addition to traditional figures and allegories, such as Justice, Force, Temperance, Sun and Moon, found on the 16 tarot cards, there are also 24 cards within the standard suits of Clubs, Cups, Coins and Swords. On the Two of Cups is a printed note stating that the obligatory tariff on the deck had been paid.



An exceptionally rare Minchiate deck

20 [FRANÇOIS II DE POILLY]

[De Poilly Minchiate deck].

Publication
[Paris, François de Poilly, c1725].

Description
98 engraved playing-cards, black pattern to versos.

Dimensions
93 by 60mm (3.75 by 2.25 inches).

One of just two known examples, this deck of 98 cards was made in the early eighteenth century by François de Poilly II, son of the famed engraver and publisher of the same name, whose family disowned him after he married the family servant against their will. Having run away to Lyon with his new wife, François II returned to Paris after his father’s death around 1696, and continued to work as an engraver and publisher from his premises on the Rue St Jacques. In addition to decorative prints, portraits and book illustrations, he published this minchiate deck.

Minchiate, which originated in Florence in the sixteenth century, is closely related to tarocchi and its cards therefore bear resemblance to tarot cards. The game is more complicated, however, and includes an expanded total of 40 trump cards. François II’s deck was based on engravings made by his father in the 1650s following a trip to Italy. François I modified the traditional Italian Minchiate deck by using French suits, and incorporating elements of Tarot Nouveau and themes from classical mythology. Upon inheriting his father’s engravings, François II made further changes, rearranging the order of the trump cards and incorporating “Momus”, which was previously the fool card, and a new “Chaos” card to result in 42 trumps. As such, it is actually not possible to play a traditional game of Minchiate with François II’s deck, suggesting that these changes may have been made out of ignorance rather than innovation.

They are nonetheless highly attractive cards, with intricate scenes, figures and symbols engraved on each. On number 2, the god of the sun, Phoebus, drives his fiery chariot through the air, while on number 22, the female personification of hope (“l’esperence”) stands, her hands clasped, on a small sandbank in the middle of stormy sea. The court cards, which consist of Valet, Cheval, Dame and Roy, depict figures from four continents, with the Spades representing Africa, Hearts Europe, Diamonds Asia and Clubs America. On the King of Spades, a man in a plumed head-dress sits on a throne, a lion prowling before him.



Historical minchiate deck

21 PAZZI, A[ntonio] [with] MOGALLI, C[osimo]

[Minchiate deck with illustrations and descriptions].

Publication
[Florence, Anton Giuseppe Molinelli, 1725].

Description
51 engraved cards with original hand-colour in part, printed in black and sepia, manuscript signature and contemporary ink tax stamp to card XXXII, woodcut emblem design to versos.

Dimensions
100 by 58mm (4 by 2.25 inches).

References
Verame (2014) p145.

Minchiate, which originated in Florence in the sixteenth century, is a game closely related to tarocchi and its cards, played with a 98-card deck. In 1725, Antonio Pazzi designed a new deck of minchiate cards with the assistance of his mentor Cosimo Mogalli. Both Pazzi and his mentor Mogalli were Florentine engravers who specialized in portraits and religious subjects, reproducing many paintings of the Italian old masters as prints. Their deck was printed by their fellow Florentine, Anton Giuseppe Molinelli, whose signature appears on the ploughman card (XXXII) in the present deck, along with the tax stamp.

Each of Pazzi's cards show an illustration of a biblical, mythological or historical event, place or person with a description beneath: card VII depicts a sea-monster spouting water from its two blow-holes, with the caption summarising the story of the prophet Jonah; card XXIII lauds the ancient hero Ulysses as “a talented golden man of rare eloquence and experience, loyalty, good in war, and very patient”; card XXXVII presents two bundles of sticks, the “Fasci”, and explains how these were carried before Roman officials as a symbol of their authority. In fact, it is from these that the word ‘fascism’ is derived. The histories of the great empires are told across the suited cards, with the Clubs describing the story of Rome, the Coins that of Assyria, the Cups Persia and the Swords Greece.



The game of comet

22 [LABOURET, Jean], probably [and] CHARPENTIER, E[tienne]

La Comete Royal [and] Regles du Jeu de la Comete.

Publication Paris, E[tienne] Charpentier, [c1750 and c1870].

Description One uncut printed playing card with original hand-colour, additional printed sheet with original hand-colour.

Dimensions 232 by 157mm. (9.25 by 6.25 inches). Sheet: 297 by 203mm.

References cf Yale Cary FRA258, Yale Cary FRARules2S.

In the seventeenth century, a new card game emerged in which players aimed to be the first to get rid of all their cards by offloading them to whichever of their opponents was found unable to continue a numeric sequence. The game was originally called manille, but was renamed comet after Halley’s comet of 1682, because of the way the laid-out cards formed a long trail. Comet gained a new lease of life in the mid-eighteenth century, when a new card design was incorporated for the Nine of Diamonds, a wild card that could stand for any other card in the deck. The new design, of which the present is an uncut example shows a large star with a fiery tail, flanked by four stars on either side. It is captioned “la comète royal” and has a miniature depiction of the actual card along the lower edge. Yale (Cary Collection) suggest Jean Labouret as the maker of the deck in which this card was originally found, with a date of around 1750. Labouret’s name is not, however, found on the card and information about him is exceptionally scarce.

Also present is a sheet explaining “the rules of the game of comet”. The rules are framed by a decorative coloured floral border, atop which is a vignette showing a table of six players enjoying a game outside. Another smaller vignette at the centre of the lower border shows a man and a woman meeting in a field, captioned “I am looking for a faithful heart. Is yours like this?”. This may have been a trademark of the engraver, Etienne Charpentier, who was active in Paris during the mid- to late-eighteenth century.



Aesop’s Fables

23 [KIRK, James after France BARLOW]

[Aesop’s Fables].

Publication
[London, James Kirk, 1759].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, contemporary ink tax stamp to the Ace of Spades, versos blank.

Dimensions
94 by 64mm (3.75 by 2.5 inches).

In the mid-eighteenth century, medallist and engraver John Kirk went into business with his son James Kirk to operate a toystore, the Grotto Toyshop, in St. Paul’s Churchyard. Among the delights on offer at the shop were decks of playing-cards, including the present set. Each of its 52 cards presents a scene from Aesop’s Fables, as illustrated by Francis Barlow. Known as “the father of British sporting painting”, Francis Barlow was one of the most prolific illustrators and printmakers of the seventeenth century, and creator of one of the earliest comic strips, “A True Narrative of the Horrid Hellish Popish Plot”, published in 1682. It is thought that from 1677 to 1679, Barlow produced a number of designs intended for playing-cards, concerning themes such as the Rump Parliament, Popish Plot, and, as here, Aesop’s Fables.

Each card has a miniature version of the traditional playing-card in the upper left-hand corner so as to remain usable. However the majority of the design is taken up by the illustration of the animals involved in the fable, beneath which is a poetic summary of the tale as well as an explanation of its moral. For example, the King of Clubs shows the story of “The Lyon and Mouse”.

“The mouse for his late Service fill’d with pride
Demands the Royall Virgin for his Bride
The match agreed which he in flame admired
He unawares crus’d by her Paw expir’d.

MORAL

Ill Judg’d Ambishion oft itself Destroys
And what is hopes for most it least enjoys”.



Auvergne pattern

24 [ANONYMOUS]
[Auvergne pattern cards].

Publication
[Clermont, probably c1760].

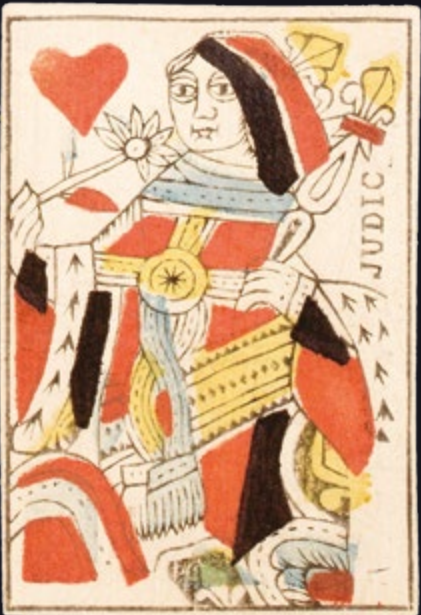
Description
48 woodblock playing card with original hand-colour, versos blank, without the Seven, Eight, Nine, and Ten of Diamonds.

Dimensions
84 by 56mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

This rare deck of pre-Revolutionary French playing-cards follows the standard design conceived in Auvergne during the seventeenth century, and then maintained in the Paris pattern. The style is characterised by plain number cards whose value is represented by the number of pip marks, and court cards representing figures from history, legend and scripture:

- Clubs - Alexander, Argine, Marc
- Diamonds - Caesar, Rachel, Hector
- Hearts - Charlemagne, Judith, La Hire
- Spades - David, Pallas, Hogier

Along the lower edge of the Jack of Clubs appears the word “Clermont”. The city of Clermont-Ferrand in the Auvergne region produced a number of decks, which can often be identified by the horse’s head emblem on the King of Diamonds.



Hexenspiel cards

25 SCHENK, Joh[an]n Heinr[ich]

[Hexenspiel cards].

Publication
Nuremberg, Joh[an]n Heinr[ich] Schenck,
[1760-1770].

Description
32 woodblock printed cards with original
hand-colour.

Dimensions
85 by 57mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

The game of Hexenspiel, or Vogelspiel, appeared in Germany and Austria in the seventeenth century, descended from the Italian game of Cuccu and thus belonging to a family of games including the Swedish Kille and Danish Gnav. Gameplay involved a round of bidding before players attempted to capture certain cards from their opponents. Suits are not relevant in Hexenspiel, and do not even appear on specialized decks, as here, and instead it is through the rank or value of the card that players win or lose.

In the present deck there are two copies of each card, which fall into three groups: number cards from one to 12, marked with roman numerals; five trumps outranking these; four low cards below zero and a “Joker”. The top trump is the Bird which gives the name Vogelspiel to the game, followed by the Sentinel, the Horse, the Cat, and the Tavern, while the Witch, from which the title Hexenspiel comes, is a kind of magic card and defeats all others. Apart from the number cards, each card has a drawing illustrating the creature or object it represents, captioned in a banner above. To show the correct orientation of the numerals on the number cards, a colon is printed after the numeral.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, there were three cardmakers active in Nuremberg on whose cards the imprint “I. Schenck” is found: a father and his two sons. The present deck was made by the former, Johann Heinrich, who initially worked as a journeyman in the city from 1742 to 1751, before becoming a master and continuing his career as an independent man. He published a number of decks of playing-cards using a range of suit systems and designed for several different games.



Bavarian wedding

26 GÖBL, Andreas Benedict

Baierische Hochzeit [Bavarian Wedding].

Publication
[Munich], Andreas Benedict Göbl, [c1765].

Description
78 woodcut cards with fine original hand-colour, blue floral pattern to versos, housed in original publisher's dark brown leather case, top flap torn with red tape repair, without lower flap.

Dimensions
110 by 58mm (4.25 by 2.25 inches).

Little is known about Andreas Benedict Göbl, apart from that he produced playing-cards in Munich during the eighteenth century. Using the French, Spanish and German suit systems, his cards spanned a range of themes, designs and patterns, from animals to nuptials, as here. In the French suits of Spades, Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs, this is a tarot deck consists of 22 trump cards (I to XXI and a Fool, known as the Excuse in French and the Skiz in German), four court cards (King, Queen, Cavalier and Jack) and finally the Ace of each suit. The court cards show the full-length royal characters, Cavaliers mounted on horses and Queens holding flowers, while on the numbered trump cards a procession scene is shown.

It represents the ill-fated wedding day of Emperor Joseph II and Maria Josefa of Bavaria, forced by Empress Maria Theresa in 1765. Herself a granddaughter of Emperor Joseph I, Maria Josefa was described by contemporary sources as warm and good-natured but sadly unattractive and lacking in wits. She thus failed to gain her husband's affections, and it is believed that the marriage was probably never consummated. Worse yet, Maria Josefa died only two years later when a smallpox epidemic afflicted the Viennese court to which she had been sent. The unhappy couple are shown riding - and simultaneously feasting! - in a horse-drawn carriage, followed by a number of officials, noblemen, and finally commoners. German inscriptions beneath each illustration describe the people and scenes shown.



Cotillion cards

27 [ANONYMOUS after LONGMAN & LUKEY]

[Pack of New Cotillions variation].

Publication
[England, c1775].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, versos blank, housed in original painted wooden slipcase, slightly scuffed.

Dimensions
94 by 63mm (3.75 by 2.5 inches).

In 1770, Cheapside cardmakers Longman and Lukey published a deck of playing-cards entitled ‘Complete Pack of New Cotillions’, on which there appeared the musical scores for tunes of the popular dance. In vogue in France and English during the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the cotillion was danced in a group, or “pool”, of eight people made up of four couples.

The present deck appears to be a close copy of their cards, although with several variations. For one, the miniature representation of the traditional playing-card in the upper left-hand corner is vertical in orientation, while the staves run horizontally across the landscape card. Furthermore, in addition to cotillions, tunes for other dances are also included, such as “The Cossack’s Dance” and “The Lango Lee”.



Belgian double-figure cards

28 WYNANTS, J.

[Belgian deck and wrapper].

Publication
Brussels, J. Wynants, [late-eighteenth century].

Description
32 woodblock playing-cards with original hand-colour, black geometric pattern to versos, original publisher’s decorative paper wrapper.

Dimensions
82 by 49mm (3.25 by 2 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p50.

J. Wynants was one of Brussels’s four principle cardmakers, alongside Keuster, Dumoulin and Van den Borre. His name appears on the wrapper of the present deck, alongside the main illustration of an open palm.

Wynants was a pioneer of the double-ended court card, producing some of the earliest examples of what would later become the norm. Indeed, the court cards in the present deck show cheerful double-ended portraits of the royal characters, with the Queens and Kings labelled as different historical and mythological figures:

Spades - David, Barbera
Hearts - Julius Caesar, Helen of Troy
Diamonds - Charlemagne, Lucretia
Clubs - Hector, [possibly] Pentamee

It is not clear who the Queens of Spades and Clubs are meant to represent, especially since the court cards do not follow any of the prominent patterns for the labelling of the monarchs. Furthermore, the Jack of Spades holds a small banner bearing the initials “BIH”, an acronym which also remains ambiguous.



All that Jass

29 SCHAER, Bernard

[Swiss pattern Jass cards].

Publication
Mümliswil, Bernard Schaer, 1789.

Description
36 woodblock playing-cards with original hand-colour, hexagon and sun pattern to verso.

Dimensions
84 by 53mm (3.25 by 2 inches).

During the eighteenth century the small Swiss village of Mümliswil became known as a centre of playing-card production. At this time, the Schaer family was involved in making paper, maps and cards, with the first deck of Schaer cards produced around 1750. The Two of Bells on the present deck bears the name “F. Bernard Schaer” and the date 1789.

Franz Bernard directed the family business from 1755 until his death in 1800, when the firm became known as “Bernard Schaer’s widow and sons”.

Under Franz Bernard, the firm published both tarot and playing-cards for a variety of games including Jass, as here. Generally considered the Swiss national card game, Jass is played with 36 cards in four suits: the Six to Nine number cards and the Ace, King, Queen, Ober, Under and Banner of Bells, Roses, Shields and Acorns. The court cards are depicted as full-length figures in a variety of poses, while the number cards are identified by the number of pip marks elaborately illustrated on each one.



Engraved Haupold deck

30 HAUPOLD, Andreas

Versetiget von Andreas Haupold...

Publication
Nuremberg, [late-eighteenth century].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, pink floral design to versos, original publisher's decorative paper wrapper, peephole, seal and string intact.

Dimensions
90 by 60mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

Andreas Haupold was active as a cardmaker in Nuremberg at the end of the eighteenth century. His output includes several decks of woodcut cards, and the present deck of engraved cards. The Kings are seated on thrones with crown and sceptre; the Queen cards depict women wearing semi-formal dresses and holding fans; the Jacks are all standing straight with feathered tricorne hats on. On the floor beside the King of Clubs rests the Nuremberg coat of arms.



Cards on cards

31 LOCKER, E[dward] H[awke]

[Manuscript cards featuring cards].

Publication
[London], 1799.

Description
52 manuscript playing-cards with fine original hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
122 by 80mm (4.75 by 3.25 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p78-79.

An extraordinary deck of manuscript cards from the turn of the nineteenth century by English watercolorist Edward Hawke Locker. Each card shows a different character, most from contemporary London, including a royal cavalryman and a criminals in the stocks, although some vary from this theme by presenting, for example, a knight in a suit of armour or a fictional coat of arms flanked by a pig and a monkey. What makes the cards unique is the way in which Locker has incorporated the traditional playing-cards into each illustrated scene, with the exception of some face cards, where the miniature card appears as usual in the upper right-hand corner.

Most cards, however, appear as props in their relevant cards, with an artist painting the Queen of Clubs on a canvas, a herald reading an announcement from the Four of Clubs, a woman stealing the Six of Clubs from a gentleman's pocket, and a maid holding up her mistress's mirror, in which the Queen of Hearts is reflected.



A grotesque game

32 [ANONYMOUS]

[*"Jeu des binettes" - an early nineteenth century transformation deck*].

Publication
[Paris, c1800].

Description
32 engraved playing-cards, with fine original hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
110 by 71mm (4.25 by 2.75 inches).

The concept of the "grotesque" emerged in eighteenth century art and literature as a forerunner to the gothic; it involves distorted, mysterious or incongruous forms and ideas. This certainly applies to the figures shown on the present cards, the faces of which are double-sided in the case of the number cards, and in the case of the court cards, four-sided! The former shows caricatures from different levels of society, with the male version facing left and the female right. Likewise, the latter have exaggerated illustrations of characters such as the priest and the admiral, drawn in such a way that they seem to face left, right and ahead, and can be viewed from either side of the card. For this reason the miniature versions of the traditional court cards that indicate the cards' values appear in both upper left- and lower right-hand corners, whereas on the number cards they are only in the top-left.



French cards by a German cardmaker

33 GÖBL, Andreas Benedict

[French cards].

Publication
Munich, Andreas Benedict Göbl, [c1800].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, pink floral design to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard case.

Dimensions
69 by 51mm (2.75 by 2 inches).

References
Schultz & Büchler page 176-179.

Andreas Benedict Göbl published tarot and playing-cards in the German and French suits. The present deck represents the latter, with the court cards depicting full-length portraits of Kings, Queens and Jacks, with Göbl's name appearing on the Ace of Clubs, and his city on the King of Diamonds. The King of Spades has the Star of David symbol on his chest, referring to the traditional depictions of King David on this card in several French patterns. Interestingly, the Jack of Spades has a pet dog!



Fontaine’s fables

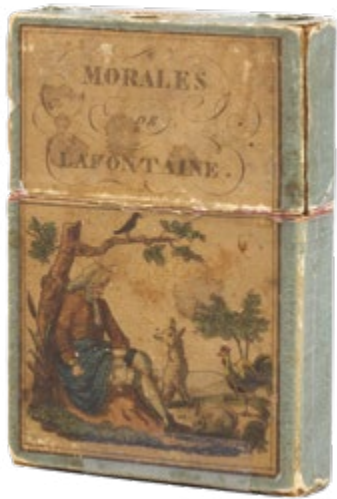
34 [ANONYMOUS]
Morales de Lafontaine.

Publication
[France, ?early nineteenth century].

Description
32 engraved cards with fine original hand-colour, versos blank, housed in original publisher’s printed cardboard slipcase, bottom flap torn at fold.

Dimensions
80 by 56mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

The fables of seventeenth century French author and poet Jean de La Fontaine are illustrated on the cards in this deck. Miniature versions of the cards from a traditional 32-card deck appear in the upper corner of each card, making the deck playable, but the focus is on the story portrayed by the main illustration, beneath which the final two lines from Fontaine’s fable is quoted. These include “The women and the secret” (Ten of Diamonds), “The two pigeons” (Jack of Hearts) and “The lion and the rat” (Ace of Spades). The latter shows the lion caught in a net, waiting for the loyal rat to come and chew him out. Beneath the illustration the captions reads “Patience et longueur de temps / Font plus que force ni que rage” (Patience and time / Do more than force or rage).



Aluette cards from Nantes

35 ROINÉ, [Pierre]

[Aluette cards].

Publication
Nantes, [Pierre] Roiné, [c1810].

Description
48 woodblock playing-cards with original hand-colour, blue dotted arrow design to versos.

Dimensions
82 by 54mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

Nantes has historically been a hub of card production, with several houses accounting for a wealth of the city’s output. Among these family businesses was that of the Roiné firm, which was active throughout the later decades of the eighteenth century and early decades of the nineteenth. The firm published many decks including several for the game of Aluette, as here, which uses a 48-card Spanish deck. Accordingly the suits found on these cards are not Spades, Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs but rather the Spanish suits of Coins, Cups, Clubs and Swords, and the court cards are depicted in the Franco-Spanish pattern.

“Roiné the Elder of Nantes” is found written on several of the court cards. The firm had been founded by Urbain Roiné and left to his son, Pierre-Vincent, in 1782. Pierre-Vincent’s son, Pierre, operated the business from 1802 to 1817, generally under the name “Roiné aîné” (Roiné senior), so that upon his death his widow continued the firm in partnership with the his younger brother, Philibert, under the name “Veuve Roiné aîné & Roiné Fils Jeune”. Thus it appears that the present deck was published under the direction of Pierre Roiné some time during the early-nineteenth century. In between the illustrated batons on the Two of Clubs is an advertisement for the shop at “Quai Cassard No. 2”, where the cards could presumably be purchased. Other design features include illustrations of violins, flowers and various animals including butterflies, swans and a cow, and the central coin on the Five of Coins shows a vignette of a couple in bed.



Unexpected transformations

36 [ANONYMOUS]
[Early nineteenth century French transformation deck].
Publication
[Paris, Mozart Papetier, 1811-1823].
Description
32 engraved miniature playing-cards with original hand-colour, versos blank.
Dimensions
53 by 40mm (2 by 1.5 inches).
References
Albert Field, 'Transformation Playing Cards 9 on page 74-75.

The Mozart Stationers at Rue des Lombards 43, Paris, is recorded in several documents from the early-nineteenth century as stocking a variety of goods such as books, stamps, playing-cards and chocolate boxes (without the chocolate!). Among the decks of cards available was the present transformation deck, on which the pip symbols are incorporated into the design of the scenes and characters shown. These fall under a variety of themes, from the exotic to the everyday: the Nine of Diamonds shows three men in turbans sitting before their camel (“Halte d’Arabes”); the Seven of Hearts depicts the Biblical prodigal son (“L’Enfant Prodigne”); the Nine of Hearts presents two men fencing (“L’escrime”).
The court cards and Aces bear illustrations of single figures, with the former showing gods from classical mythology. The latter are rather less consistent: the Ace of Spades shows a rotund man meditating under a parasol, captioned “Philosophe Chinois”; the Ace of Hearts depicts a peasant woman husking grain in a barn; the Ace of Diamonds presents “le Vieux Brave” sat drunk in a field. Most bizarrely, the Ace of Clubs shows a human figure with a lion-like face, wearing an Egyptian nemes and handling a canopic jar, with the caption “Pagode Chinois” (Chinese Pagoda).



Nixon’s transformation deck

37 [NIXON, John]

Metastasis.

Publication
[London, S. & T. Fuller, 1811].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with fine original hand-colour, versos blank, housed in original publisher’s printed cardboard slipcase.

Dimensions
94 by 64mm (3.75 by 2.5 inches).

A transformation deck designed, drawn and possibly painted by John Nixon, a caricaturist and amateur actor who worked with several of London’s publishers to produce stage prints and proofs.

Nixon is known to have served as a special jurymen at the Guildhall court, and as a captain in the Guildhall Volunteers, where he no doubt picked up inspiration for his satirical caricatures. The cards were published by Samuel and Joseph Fuller, brothers who ran a publishing firm that operated from 34 Rathbone Place, London, during the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1862, the premises were sold, along with all their stock; an advertisement for a local auction house ran: “Extensive, Interesting, and Valuable Collection of Modern Engravings, and Illustrated Books, principally the Stock of Messrs. Fuller (sold in consequence of the retirement of the senior partner)”.

Nixon’s transformation deck consists of light-hearted cards that are part illustration, part satire, of day-to-day life in contemporary Europe. There is no accompanying booklet with either explanation or description of the characters shown on the court cards, meaning that some of them remain rather ambiguous. One recognisable figure is Napoleon, while the King of Spades seems to feature Joseph Bonaparte, short-lived king of Spain from 1808 to 1813. The female figures are less specific: the Queen of Hearts is shown contentedly making tarts, while the Queen of Spades gazes at herself in a mirror, ominously attended upon by a skeleton.

The pip cards exhibit some early examples of the “transformation” style that was beginning to emerge, in which the suit marks become a key part of the central image. For instance, on the Eight of Spades, the spades symbols form the soldiers’ helmets as they march in ranks. Similarly, on the Two of Diamonds, the heads of the two cribbage-players take on the shape of the diamond symbol. Cribbage was a game that emerged at the beginning of the seventeenth century and involved keeping score on a wooden board.

A reproduction of this deck was published for the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the English Playing Card Society.





Viennese transformation deck

38 NEIDL, Johann
[Viennese transformation deck].

Publication
Vienna, [c1814].

Description
52 manuscript playing-cards in pencil with original watercolour, versos blue, housed in contemporary leather envelope case.

Dimensions
92 by 60mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

German-born engraver and art dealer Johann Niedl established his business in Vienna in 1795, where he continued to operate throughout the subsequent three decades. Among his output was a deck of playing-cards, published in 1814. The pip and the Ace cards are brought to life through the integration of the suit marks into a more general illustration. This style emerged in the early nineteenth century, with the decks becoming known as transformation playing-cards.

Here, pip symbols become faces, stamps and accessories in the designs that ornament the number cards. These do not seem to follow a set theme, but rather depict various figures, scenes and animals, some fantastical. Notably, all the cards are vertically oriented, which is rather unusual for transformation decks of this period. The coloured face cards of the Diamonds, Hearts and Spades show the typical royal figures, full-length in their courtly outfits; in contrast, the King and Queen of Clubs appear to be wearing the dress commonly associated with native Americans in illustrations of this periods, while the Jack looks more like a jester or joker card.

The present example of the cards are the initial manuscript design, sketched in pencil and carefully hand-painted with watercolours. The deck is housed in a contemporary leather envelope case.



Viennese transformation deck

39 NEIDL, Johann
[Viennese transformation deck].

Publication
Vienna, [c1814].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, contemporary ink tax stamp to Ace of Hearts, red mottled pattern to versos, all edges gilt.

Dimensions
91 by 61mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

The transformation cards by Johann Neidl, now an engraved and hand-coloured deck. For a description of the cards, see item 38.



Inspired by Jacques-Louis David

40 “AVERDANO - ADR”; after
GATTEAUX, Nicolas Marie

[Playing-Cards showing David,
Charlemagne, Caesar and
Alexander].

Publication
[Bari, 1815].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with original
hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
83 by 54mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

References
cf. BM1896,0501.566.1-52; Verame
(1989) p174.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, French cardmakers began to differentiate their decks by assigning identities to the court cards. Although various historical and mythological figures can be found on cards of this period, one system became formalised around the turn of the century, in which the King of Hearts represented Charlemagne, Spades King David, Diamonds Julius Caesar and Clubs Alexander the Great.

In 1808, Napoleon’s government commissioned Jacques-Louis David to design a new deck of playing-cards, for which he retained this pattern, with its full-length figures of the kings, each accompanied by a male and a female figure associated with him:

- Spades - David, Abigail, Jazael
- Hearts - Charlemagne, Hildegarde, Ogier
- Diamonds - Caesar, Calpurnia, Curion
- Clubs - Alexander, Statira, Parmenion

The following year, medallist Nicolas-Marie Gatteaux made improvements to David’s design, mainly making the kings’ clothing more impressive and altering the figures’ poses. Interestingly, he has also remodelled the illustration of Caesar based on David’s own 1807 portrait of Napoleon. The present playing-cards are Italian reproductions of Gatteaux’s work; the shield of the Jack of Clubs, which originally bore the words “Gatteaux 1811”, now appears “Averdano” and the monogramme “ADR”.



Wedding game

41 [BOURRUT-LÉMERIE]

[Nouveau jeu du mariage, ou la Dot].

Publication
[Paris, Bourrut-Lémerie, 1815].

Description
33 engraved playing-cards, including additional Queen of Clubs, with original hand-colour, blue pattern to versos.

Dimensions
96 by 60mm (3.75 by 2.25 inches).

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, author and publisher Bourrut-Lémerie added to his output with several decks of cards, including educational decks as well as more straightforward playing-cards. The present example is a 32-card piquet deck in which each card displays a full-length illustration of a character at a wedding. The King and Queen of Clubs depict the groom and his bride, while on the Jacks of Clubs and Hearts appear the best man and maid of honour. A number of finely-dressed guests are found on the number cards, as well as officials, musicians, and various uninvited hangers-on labelled “importun”. On the Seven of Clubs, a man holding three full bags represents “La Dot”, or the bride’s dowry.



Houbigant’s wager

42 HOUBIGANT, A[rmand] G[ustave]
[*Dames de France*].

Publication
[Paris, 1815-1818].

Description
Eight items (various formats and sizes).
Four copies of twelve playing-cards,
two with fine original hand-colour, loose
bookplate, one on one uncut sheet, with
manuscript ink annotation, one backed
onto Japan paper, one small tear skilfully
repaired, one laid on black card, with two
later sheets of manuscript notes, with
twelve brass plates, housed in a walnut
frame and mounted on an easel.

References
Verame (2007) p34-7.

Son of a royal perfumer, Armand-Gustave Houbigant followed in his father’s creative footsteps, but dedicated himself to the visual rather than the olfactory arts. In 1915 he put his artistic training to use in a bet, in which his friends challenged him to produce a deck of cards that would stand out from the traditional, and apparently “boring”, playing-cards then used in France. He subsequently designed and printed the ‘Queens of France’ deck, in which the royal portraits found on standard court cards have been replaced with full-length illustrations of historic figures:

- Spades - Charlemagne, Hildegarde, Roland
- Hearts - Henry IV, Jeanne d’Albret, Crillon
- Diamonds - Saint Louis, Blanche de Castille, Jean de Joinville
- Clubs - Francois I, Marguerite de Valoi, Bayard

Unfortunately for the oblivious Houbigant, the production of playing-cards was at that time under a strict state monopoly, and his efforts led him to be called up before a tax official. In a twist of fate, however, he was let off when his talents were recognised by the Duke of Berry, who commissioned Houbigant to produce decks for his upcoming nuptials! His work proved popular over the following centuries too, as the design was copied by a number of other manufacturers, and a facsimile was published by Heraclio Fournier in 1984.

The examples collected here begin with a set of court cards printed from the original plate of 1815 and autographed by the maker himself for one Mr Deherbe. Two further examples of Houbigant’s 1815 deck are presented as uncut sheets, one unpainted and the other showing fine original hand-colour, with the suit marks and names of the characters added in paint. The second state, published in 1817 two years after the initial design, is also represented, as well as the third edition, of 1818. The latter is immediately distinguishable by the reduced size of the cards, here shown as the original set of brass plates from which they were printed.

Also present is Houbigant’s bookplate, which shows a muse reading from an open book beside a plinth on which a quotation from the Roman poet Horace appears: “nocturna versate manu versate diurna” (with your hand turn [pages] by night, by day). The manuscript notes accompanying the plates describe various games “agreeable in good company”, as well as the various numbers of cards required to play these games. Comet uses 20 ‘leaves’, whereas games relating to ‘fables and geography’ require a full deck of 52 cards.





*Pour Mr. l'abbé de la Roche, ami de Mr. de la Roche, de la part de l'auteur,
Comme un souvenir. D. le 10. Mars 1694.*



Inr. 43592 V

Maison Académique contenant un recueil général de tous
les jeux divertissans pour se regourer agréablement dans les bonnes
Compagnies

par le S^r D. L. M. de la Marinière Paris 1654 in 12

6 ff. 236 p. et 2 ff.

(Bibliographie Barber
auteurs anonymes)

J de Raquet
Jive

Tricque Trac

Belles

Guerr

Tam

Cupides

Chouettes

Remond et la Poul

Jouir Militaire

Ore

Chasse des Amours

4 fin de monde de l'homme

4 fables du monde.

Amour

Vertus

Science Arts

Agneux

Chironomantien

Guerr

Pare

Armes de Venus et Cupides

Esprit et Esprit

Amant et Amants

Jalousies

Sages

Pierres précieuses

Fontaines

Osakunt

Jentene

Maquerelle

Ballon d'Esprit

Beaux

Folie

Erreurs

Erreurs

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Erreurs

Erreurs

Erreurs

Charité
Philosoph

Poésies

Pintures

Nets d'Amour

Eschets

Parques

Suprins

Enfer

Labyrinthe

Navire

Lappon

Loliel

Cemps

Vauts

Certain

Emileux

Amoureux

Medev

Medev

Medev

Medev

Medev

Medev

Medev

Medev

Medev

Medev

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Noy de l'Esprit

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Esprit



Transformation deck with spectacular court cards

43 [NIXON, John]

[Transformation deck with animal court cards].

Publication
[England, Nixon, Cowell and Jones, c1815].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with original pen and black ink and colour wash, pink to versos.

Dimensions
90 by 62mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p237.

In addition to his famous ‘Metastasis’ deck, John Nixon published another set of transformation cards. Some of the designs from ‘Metastasis’ reappear here, such as the Five of Diamonds, which depicts a performance of Romeo and Juliet. Others are original, such as the Two of Spades, which shows a British soldier – a “triumphant volunteer” – brandishing a sword over a fallen (presumably French) enemy. The Nine of Diamonds shows a woman standing up to speak in church while her fellow laypeople roll their eyes; the card is captioned “the Spirit moves me”.

While the court cards in ‘Metastasis’ showed illustrations of everyday, historical or mythological figures, the court cards in the present deck are quite astonishing. All twelve show full-length figures. The red suits have the diamond and heart pip mark as the faces of the Kings, Queens and Jacks, who are all wearing geometrically-rendered clothing. The black suits, however, have their suit marks in the upper corner, while the faces of the royal figures have been replaced with animal heads. The Spades are depicted as an anthropomorphised monkey, cat and dog, and the Clubs as a cow, owl and sheep. All court cards have an additional decorative border, packed with miniature playing-cards.



Four manuscript transformation cards

44 [NIXON, John, or after]

[Four Diamond cards from a transformation deck].

Publication
[England, early-nineteenth century].

Description
Four manuscript playing-cards with fine original hand-colour, versos blank, contemporary manuscript annotation quoting Act Two of Twelfth Night to one verso, “How now, my hearts/ Did you never see the picture of we three?”.

Dimensions
93 by 64mm (3.75 by 2.5 inches).

This collection of four manuscript transformation cards share some similarities with those made in the early-nineteenth century by John Nixon. In particular, the Three of Diamonds shows magistrates in court, a favourite subject for Nixon’s satire. The Four of Diamonds shows a man blowing himself a kiss in a mirror. The two Sixes of Hearts are variations on a similar scene, with three figures seated before different bowls, glasses or containers. These prototypes represent a preparatory stage in the production of playing-cards.



We three kings

45 [ANONYMOUS]
[Prototype king cards].

Publication
[probably early-nineteenth century].

Description
Three manuscript playing-cards in ink and watercolour, versos blank.

Dimensions
88 by 57mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

Three Kings of Clubs, all with slightly different facial features, one with naturally-flowing garments and two with more geometrically-designed robes. These features seem to be evidence that the cards were made as a prototype before the final design was formalised and, perhaps, engraved.



Dutch fortune-telling cards

46 [ANONYMOUS]

[Fortune telling cards].

Publication
[The Netherlands, early-nineteenth century].

Description
32 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, blue to versos, housed in original publisher's decorative cardboard wrapper, one flap torn with loss.

Dimensions
61 by 46mm (2.5 by 1.75 inches).

Each of the cards in this French-suited 32-card deck has Dutch text along the lower half. These appear to give fortunes, such as “Your love is unwavering. A virtuous person loves you. You return this with love in return” (Nine of Spades) and “They try to play a trick on you: you will suffer undeserved suffering. Beware! Or they will deceive you” (Jack of Clubs). The court cards and Aces of each suit have illustrations of full-length figures, some looking cheerful and other decidedly less so. The characters on the Ace cards are each holding a sheet of paper with their respective pip marks on it. It seems that as well as traditional card games, this deck could be used to predict players’ fortunes! Although the original packaging for the deck is present, the label has been damaged to the point that the title and maker of the cards are illegible, except for the words “...Vormen met 96 toepasselijke...” (‘shapes with 96 applicable’) and “5 cents”.

To make it easier to see the value of the court cards the Jacks have 1 dot in the upper right corner. The Queens have 2 dots in the upper right corner and the Kings 3 dots.

Provenance
From the collection of Harry Kenter.



Colourful court cards

47 HOFMANN, Johann Norbert

[*Hofmann Playing-Cards*].

Publication
Vienna, Johann Norbert Hofmann, [c1816].

Description
32 engraved playing-cards with fine original
hand-colour, red pattern to versos.

Dimensions
89 by 61mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p33.

Active in Vienna through the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Austrian cardmaker Johann Norbert Hofmann published a number of decks including both tarot and playing-cards. The richly coloured court cards in the present deck depict full-length royal figures in sumptuous clothing.



Houbigant’s transformation

48 [HOUBIGANT, Armand-Gustave after Hippolye BELLANGE]

Cartes recreatives.

Publication
[Paris, A. G. Houbigant], 1819.

Description
33 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, including title-card, without two additional cards, versos blank, housed in original publisher’s printed cardboard case.

Dimensions
88 by 60mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

References
Verame (1989) p46.

Designed by Hippolyte Bellangé, an artist best-known for his paintings and prints of French battles, particularly during the Napoleonic era, ‘Cartes recreatives’ were made by Armand-Gustave Houbigant and published in 1819. A caricature portrait of Houbigant, with a heart symbol for his face, also appears on the box.

With few known copies and deviations in the size of the existing examples, there remain a great many mysteries associated with the deck. The present example is the only known one in which all of its 32 cards are of a consistent size, although it lacks the explanatory cards found in other versions. The Ace and court cards show historical and mythological figures, while the pip cards depict quaint and whimsical scenes from everyday life in the transformation style popular at the time. Houbigant had previously mocked this new vogue, saying that a man could no longer pick up a pencil without card-makers flocking to him to demand new designs.



American independence cards

49 HUMPHREYS, J[ames] Y.

[Cards from the early USA].

Publication
[Philadelphia, c1819].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with original
hand-colour, floral pattern to versos.

Dimensions
90 by 62mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

As had occurred during and after the French Revolution, the traditional court cards were often exchanged for less autocratic figures in the years following American independence. In around 1819, James Humphreys of Philadelphia produced the present deck, in which the Kings, Queens and Jacks appear as full-length illustrations of presidents, classical goddesses and native chiefs:

Spades - Andrew Jackson, Minerva, Ee-mat-la
Hearts - George Washington, Venus, Red Jacket
Diamonds - John Quincy Adams, Justice, Gy-ant-wachia
Clubs - Thomas Jefferson, Ceres, Joseph Brant

The Ace and number cards have the relevant number of pip marks to indicate their value, and the four suits are each represented by a different colour: Spades are light blue, Hearts red, Diamonds yellow and Clubs dark blue. There is a decorative framework around the Ace of Spades, and Humphrey’s name is given underneath. Life Magazine featured the court cards from this deck on its front cover on May 30, 1955, although the Ace of Clubs from a different deck was accidentally substituted.



Nature-themed French-suited tarot

50 FETSCHER, Joseph

[Animal tarot].

Publication
Munich, Joseph Fetcher, [c1820].

Description
76 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, additional title-card, blue design to versos, original publisher's decorative paper wrapper.

Dimensions
110 by 62mm (4.25 by 2.5 inches).

Munich cardmaker Joseph Fetscher published a number of decks during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, including playing-cards and tarot using both French and German suits. The present example is one of two nature-themed French-suited tarot decks Fetscher made around 1820. The double-ended court cards show the typical tarot characters of King, Queen, Knight and Knave. The characters wear sumptuous garments, some of which are rather exotic, and the King and Knight of Diamonds wear turbans and jewels. The 21 tarot cards are also double-ended, with either side showing a different illustration of an animal or scene from nature, such as an elephant (XIII) and a man hunting a hare (V).



Animal cards

51 LAMBERT

Le Jeu de la Bataille ou Le Buffon amusant.

Publication
Paris, Lambert, [c1820].

Description
32 engraved playing-cards with fine original hand-colour, versos blank, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard box.

Dimensions
82 by 58mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

During the 1820s, playing-cards were sold from No.11, Rue du Jardinets, at the premises of one Monsieur Lambert, whose decks had various themes including fashion and fables. He also published the present deck which, with its 32 cards, was designed for the game of bataille. The Ace cards show full-length male personifications of the four continents of Europe, dressed in imperial military uniform, Africa, wearing an animal skin and a turban, Asia, richly dressed and surrounded by treasures, and America, wearing a feathered head-dress and skirt and aiming an arrow. The animals illustrated on the other 28 cards do not seem to be categorised according to their native lands, since the lion appears in the Heart suit headed by the European, while there is a giraffe as the Queen of Clubs, of which America is the Ace.

Each one has a miniature version of the traditional playing-card in an upper corner to ensure that the deck remains usable, but the majority of the card is taken up with a realistic depiction of various creatures, with a caption in French beneath giving further information. For example, on the King of Spades, the rhinoceros is described: “Fearsome when provoked, in his fury he runs faster than a horse, tearing up everything and furrowing the earth with his horn”. The porcupine, which appears on the Eight of Hearts, is said to “ravage the gardens of the Cape of Good Hope; domestic, he is neither ferocious nor wild; but jealous of his freedom”.



Four Empires cards proof

52 [OCEJO, Don Felipe, or after]

[Manuscript proof cards for Four Empire deck].

Publication
[Madrid early-nineteenth century].

Description
40 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, including title-card, blue pattern to versos.

Dimensions
87 by 55mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

Following the Napoleonic invasion and then Spanish Constitution of 1812, there was a resurgence of nationalism in Spain despite the disastrous policies of King Ferdinand VII. Evidence of this can be seen in the present playing-cards, in which each suit represents one of the great empires of history, with the Spanish Empire symbolised by Cups. The three court cards - Sota, Caballo and Rey - depict noble full-length Spaniards in garments typical of the sixteenth century, when their empire was at its peak. On the other court cards, ancient Romans are illustrated on the Swords, Ottomans on the Clubs and native Americans on Coins. Even on the latter, however, Spanish influence is still emphasised, with portraits of explorers and colonisers, as well as those of Ferdinand and Isabella, depicted within the coins symbols. Furthermore, on the Ace and Four, vignettes show the European arrival in South America.

There exist two printed editions of the deck. On both, the Four of Clubs gives the names of the engravers and printer ("J. Ruiz...J. Altarriba...J. Fonséca"), while only on one does the Two of Coins name 'Don Felipe Ocejo' as the maker. The present example consists of manuscript proof cards, executed in watercolours. It gives the names of the draftsmen and printers who would produce the cards for publication, but does not name Ocejo.



Constitutional cards

53 A[RDIT] Y Q[UER], S[imón]

[Baraja Constitucional].

Publication
[Barcelona, Viuda e Hijos de D. Antonio Brusi], 1822.

Description
48 lithographic playing-cards with original hand-colour, Spanish flag to verso reading “Constitucion”.

Dimensions
87 by 53mm (3.5 by 2 inches).

One of the first Spanish decks to be lithographically printed, these playing-cards celebrate the ten year anniversary of the constitution, declared in Cádiz in 1812. The four suits represent justice (Swords), strength (Coins), unity (Clubs) and the constitution itself (a book serves as the symbol of this new suit). Various articles of the constitution appear on different cards, such as the Four of Clubs, which reads: “Article 6. Love of the homeland is one of the principle obligations of all Spaniards and likewise being just and useful”. The court cards show lions rampant, as well as heroic figures such as Pedro Velarde y Santillán (Ten of Swords), who became a martyr after dying during the French occupation of Madrid in 1808, and politician and general Rafael del Riego y Flórez (11 of Swords). The verso of each card bears the Spanish flag and reads “Constitucion”.

The deck was made by Simón Ardit y Quer, who operated a workshop in Barcelona between 1804 and 1822. He was also a sergeant in the Barcelona Volunteer Militia; voluntary battalions were established directly after the announcement of the new constitution, with Barcelona being the first city to organise one. The constitution was declared on March 19, and by July the city had already registered 3000 men, or 16% of the citizen-body.



Game of the Four Parts of the World

54 [JANET, René]

[Boston de l'Univers ou Jeu des quatre parties du Monde].

Publication
[Paris], Alph[onse] Giroux, [1825].

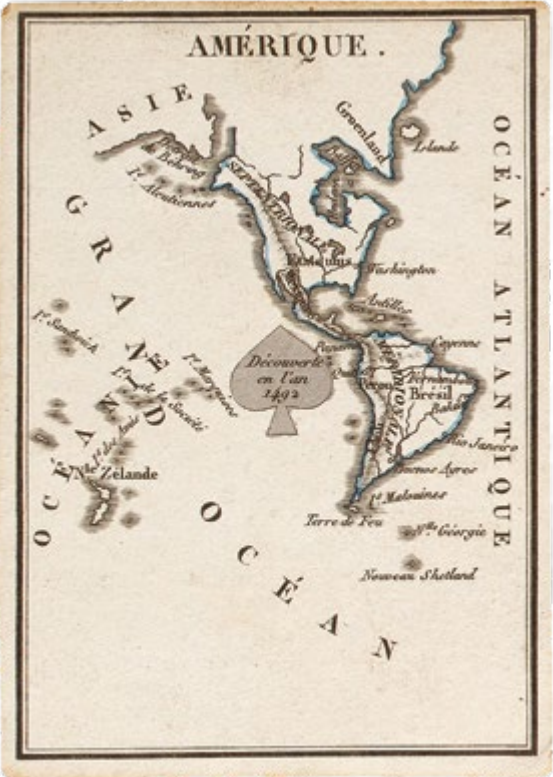
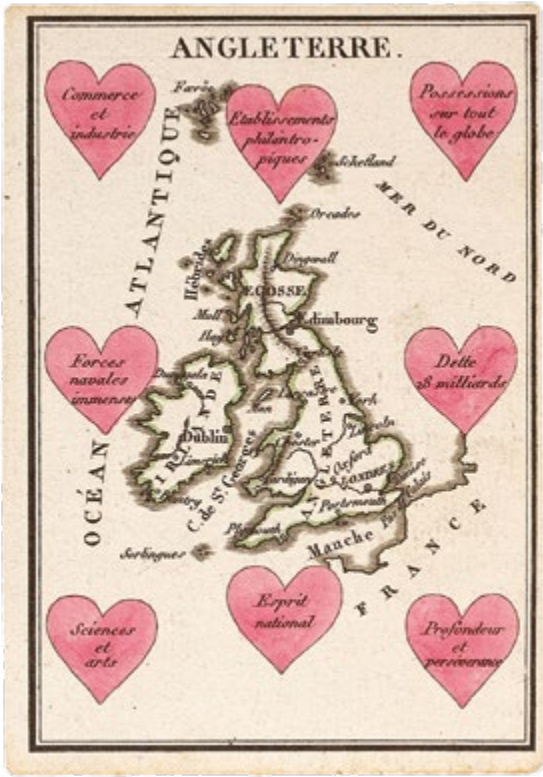
Description
52 engraved playing-cards with fine original hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
106 by 73mm (4.25 by 2.75 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p142-143.

Parisian cardmaker René Janet became ‘Cartier du Roi’, in 1822, three years before publishing the present deck of cards, entitled ‘Boston de l’Univers’. The deck would go on to inspire Charles Hodge’s ‘New Geographical Cards’, published in London in 1827. Each suit in Janet’s deck depicts a continent, with Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, and Clubs illustrating Africa, Europe, Asia, and America, respectively.

The pip cards each illustrate a country, with a map outlined on the card and concepts, produce, and geographical features associated with the place engraved within the suit-sign: ‘Iles Canaries’ (Two of Clubs) is said to hold “Vallées de Myrrhe” and “Dattiers, bananes”. On the court cards, full-length figures dressed in native outfits embody the continent represented. An associated quality is engraved within the suit-sign. While America shows “Indépendance”, “Asservissement”, and “Liberté”, Asia, shaded with orientalizing tropes, becomes the embodiment of “Faiblesse” and “Luxe”, as well as “Justice”.



Russian regional cards

55 GRECHA, N.

Объясненные географические карты [Explained geographical cards].

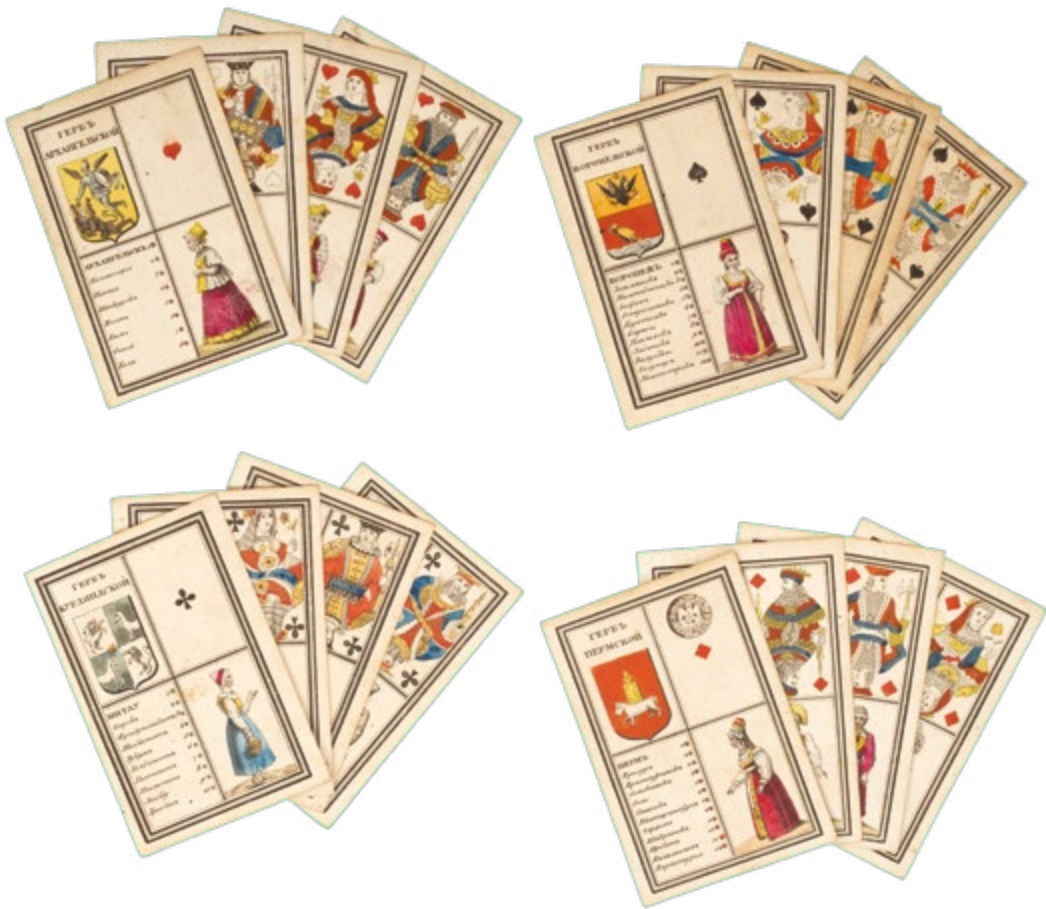
Publication
Saint Petersburg, N. Precha, 1829.

Description
52 engraved cards with original hand-colour, eight additional cards and instruction sheet, maps to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard slipcase, pink ribbon, without bottom.

Dimensions
97 by 65mm (3.75 by 2.5 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p112.

An educational deck of cards from Saint Petersburg, with the many regions of Russia depicted and described in detail. On one side, each card is divided into four: in the upper left-hand corner the region is named and its coat-of-arms illustrated; on the upper right is a playing-card, or in eight cases geographical diagrams or information; in the lower right is a full-length figure modelling typical clothing from the region; on the lower left is a key corresponding to the other side of the card, where there is a map of each region. The key lists cities found in the region. In addition to the map, the backs of the cards have compass roses and information about distances between certain locations, particularly to Moscow, and lines connecting up major cities. The borders of the regions are outlined in colour wash.



A musical arrangement

56 [BERMAN, Jeremias]

[Les Cartes Musiciennes].

Publication
[Vienna, Edersche Kunsthandlung, c1830].

Description
32 engraved playing-cards with fine original hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
88 by 57mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

In 1811 Viennese Jeremias Berman entered the business of his father-in-law, who published music, prints and greeting cards. In 1815, Berman became the sole owner of the business, which then employed several hundred staff, and under his leadership it expanded its output to include a wider range of prints and maps, as well as greeting cards that were mechanically moved by turning, pulling or folding pieces of paper. Although he published a New Year's greetings card featuring a character holding playing-cards, there are no records of Berman producing any decks other than the present during his career.

Suitable for a firm with a history of publishing music, including Beethoven's Piano Sonata No.10, Berman's cards each feature two short lines of music. It appears that when joined in a certain order, the bars are reunited in such a way as to show a complete musical score. Above the notes on each card is a miniature representation of its value in typical form: the number cards with their value represented by the number of pips; the court cards with a single full-length figure coloured in yellow, blue, red and black.



1813 and 1814 under Napoleon

57 WÜST, C[onrad] L[udwig]

[Feine Spiel-Karten in Staats Militair Costum, dem Andenken in die merkwürdigen Jahre 1813 und 1814 gewidmet].

Publication
Frankfurt, J.C.F. Neulauer, [c1830].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, blue dotted pattern to versos.

Dimensions
89 by 60mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

In 1811, Conrad Ludwig Wüst was granted a license to operate as a cardmaker, and over the following decades he produced many decks of playing-cards with a wide range of themes. Notably, he developed an association with the Frankfurt Theatre by producing cards that featured the faces of prominent actors and actresses. The industrial developments of the nineteenth century catalysed Wüst’s production, as cards could be printed by a steam-driven press and his employees could work later hours thanks to the installation of gas lighting. After Wüst’s death, his son took over the firm, which remained in the family until the early-twentieth century.

Around 1830 Wüst published a highly popular deck celebrating the battles won by Napoleon between 1796 and 1812. Its popularity no doubt inspired him to produce the present deck, which is themed around Bonaparte’s subsequent activities in the years 1813 and 1814. Each Ace shows two landscape vignettes of places and battles related to Napoleon’s campaigns and reign: Brienne, Katzbach, Leipzig, Hanau, Frankfurt, Paris and Montmartre. The court cards show important figures of the early-nineteenth century, including the Duke of Wellington as the Jack of Diamonds and Marshal Blucher as the Jack of Clubs.



Musical trappola cards

58 [SCHULZE]
[Musical Trappola].

Publication
[Stuttgart, Scheulze, 1830].

Description
32 engraved playing-cards with original
hand-colour, marbling to versos.

Dimensions
85 by 52mm (3.25 by 2 inches).

When joined in a certain order, the cards of this nineteenth century German trappola deck form a complete musical score with lyrics to a Thuringian folk song by one J. Honesta. Above the two staves that appear on each card is a miniature representation of its value in typical form: the number cards have their value represented by the number of pip symbols; the court cards with a single half-length figure showing either a man, woman or young lad. The pips on the Ace cards are framed within a shield outline.



Game of Heroes

59 MANIEZ, E. F. V.
[Jeu de Héros de la Révolution de
Juillet 1830].

Publication
[Paris], Imp. de Fosset, [1831].

Description
32 engraved playing-cards with original
hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
80 by 54mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

References
BM 1896,0501.668.1-30.

The 32-card deck used to play a number of European card games, including piquet, skat, belote, euchre and préférence, consists of the Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, Jack, Queen, King and Ace of each suit. The present 32-card deck follows this pattern, with each of the number cards representing a scene from the July Revolution, and the court cards depicting full-length figures from the conflict. The July Revolution lasted from July 27th to 29th, 1830, and saw King Charles X ousted from power. Shockwaves were felt across Europe, most significantly resulting in the partition of Belgium and the foundation of the Netherlands as an independent state. The vignettes on the cards are captioned beneath, promising that “glorious victims you will be avenged” and showing the “courageous resistance of the journalists”. Miniature versions of the traditional playing-cards are found in the upper left-hand corner of each.



Literary tarot

60 TIMAR, Franz

[Tarot cards with literary scenes].

Publication
Pressburg [Bratislava], Franz Timar, [c1840s].

Description
42 engraved playing-cards with original
hand-colour, pink floral design to versos.

Dimensions
100 by 53mm (4 by 2 inches).

This deck of tarot cards from Slovakia has a literary theme, with each of the twenty trump cards (II to XXI) displaying an illustrated scene from a great work of literature. The author and title of the text are written on either side of the card, alongside Roman numerals. The first shows Friedrich’s Schiller’s 1797 ballad ‘Die Kraniche des Ibykus’, and the final Goethe’s ‘Faust’, completed in 1831. Despite being in German, the deck uses the French suits.

On the double-ended Knight of Diamonds, the maker of the cards is given as “Franz Timar in Pressburg”. There is no documentary evidence of a cardmaker by that name in city directories, but the 1840 military records for Pressburg, now Bratislava, lists one Franz Timar as a corporal. Chronologically, Raimund’s ‘Der Verschwender’ of 1834 is the last piece of literature featured on the cards, providing a *terminus post quem* for the deck.



“the most beautiful unpublished deck of the nineteenth century”

61 G.R.

[*Manuscript semi-transformation cards*].

Publication
[Probably France], 1845.

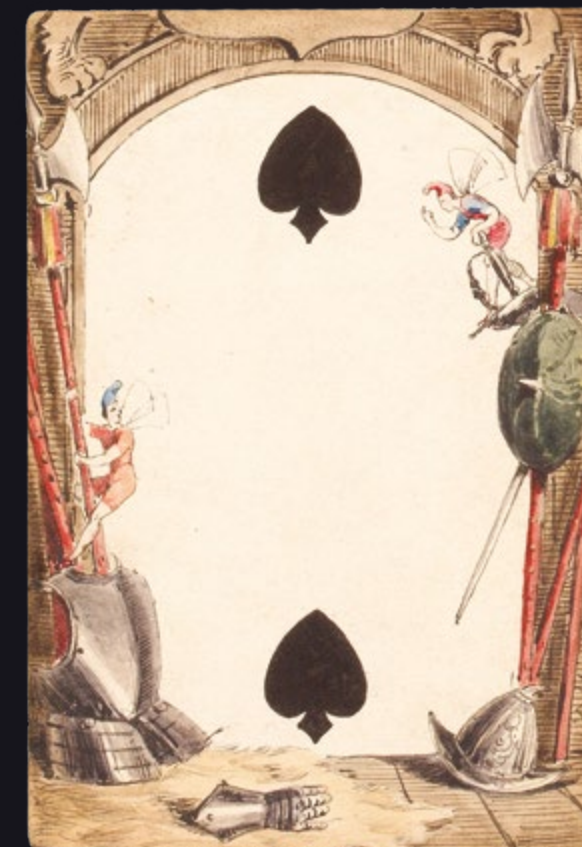
Description
52 manuscript playing-cards in original colour wash with gold highlights, versos blank.

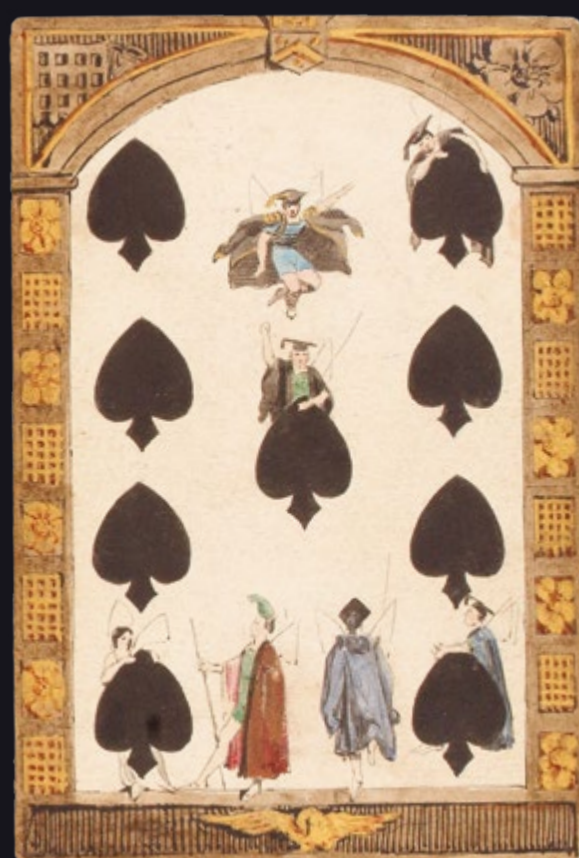
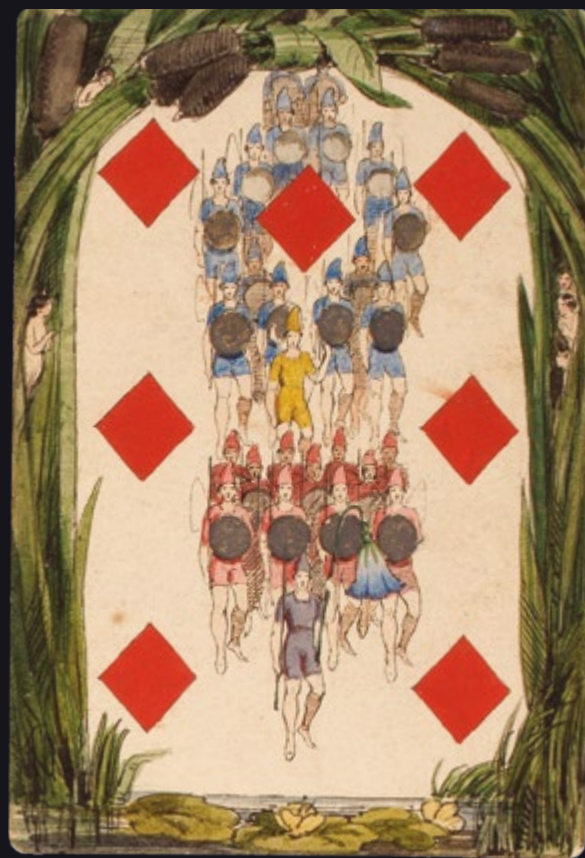
Dimensions
113 by 78mm (4.5 by 3 inches).

References
Verame (1989) p55-57; Verame (2007) p70-71.

Signed with a GR monogram on the Ten of Clubs but otherwise anonymous, these manuscript playing-cards have justly been considered “the most beautiful unpublished deck of the nineteenth century” (Verame). Each card is set within an outer decorative framework in a variety of designs and shapes, sometimes with a trompe-l’oeil effect (Three of Diamonds, Nine of Clubs).

The number cards and Aces show enchanting scenes in which fairies balance on the pip symbols (Six of Clubs, Five of Hearts) or use cunning teamwork to handle human-sized objects (Two of Spades, Seven of Clubs). The way in which the suit symbols are set within these cards places the deck in the semi-transformation style. On each of the face cards a full-length courtly figure stands dressed in a lavish costume, coloured according to their suit: Spades are in yellow, Hearts in blue, Diamonds green and Clubs red. The intricate detail, ethereal theme and whimsical colouring results in a captivating deck of cards.





Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité

62 [PATROIS, Isidore]

[Jeu des libérateurs].

Publication
[Paris, Lartigue, 1848].

Description
32 engraved playing-cards with original
hand-colour, “squiggle” design to versos.

Dimensions
83 by 54mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

Nineteenth century French painter Isidore Patrois produced landscapes, portraits, and still lifes throughout his career, his work often portraying religious and historical subjects. In 1848 he designed the present deck of playing-cards, themed around the revolutions of the previous century. The court cards thus show full-length historical and allegorical figures.

The King cards depict George Washington, Napoleon Bonaparte, Simón Bolívar and Swiss folk hero William Tell. The Queen cards show female personifications of the Republic in the forms of Liberté, Égalité and Fraternité. The Jack cards represent symbols of heroism: Joseph Bara, a drummer boy in the Revolutionary army killed in 1793; Agricol Viala, a 13-year old killed while opposing the Royalist army; Français, likely symbolising all the young patriots of France; “D[']arcole”, presumably referring to the 1796 Battle of Arcole, in which Napoleon led his troops under heavy fire across a bridge into the city.



Elements, seasons, and cultivators

63 [ANONYMOUS]
[Allegorical court cards].

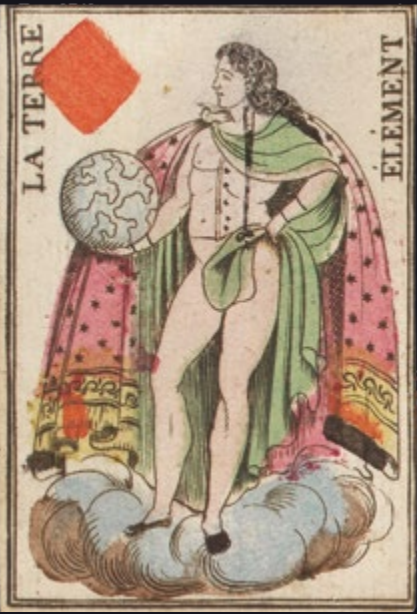
Publication
[France, nineteenth century].

Description
12 engraved playing-cards with original
hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
81 by 56mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

Allegorical French-suited court cards showing full-length figures representing elements, seasons and cultivators. The elements of earth (Diamond), fire (Heart), air (Club), and water (Spade) depict semi-naked figures standing atop their respective elements. The seasons appear as Roman goddesses: winter (Diamond) is Hiver, summer (Heart) is Ceres, autumn (Club) is Pomona, and spring (Spade) is Flora.

Finally the “cultivateurs” cards show four men working outdoors, the lumberjack (Diamond) cutting wood, the reaper (Heart) cutting wheat, the grape harvester (Club) walking between the vines with a large basket on his back, and the gardener (Spade) watering flowers. These are each captioned along the lower edge: the lumberjack’s card reads “la souche” (the stump), apt as he cuts down trees; the reaper’s card states “pour tous” (for all), presumably referring to the universal consumption of grain; the gardener’s says “desire”, probably because of the romantic associations of flowers; the grape harvester’s card, however, is captioned “la miche” (the loaf). This final connection is much more obscure. It could perhaps be a reference to Biblical bread and wine, or evoke imagery associated with honest labour or simple pleasures.



German transformation deck

64 [ANONYMOUS]

[Transformation deck with double-ended court cards].

Publication
[Germany, nineteenth century].

Description
53 manuscript playing-cards with fine original hand-colour, including additional Three of Diamonds, blue pattern to versos.

Dimensions
91 by 60mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p250.

This anonymous transformation deck from nineteenth century Germany takes inspiration from some of the earliest transformation decks. For example the strategic placement of the pip mark on the Ace of Hearts was a common feature of transformation cards, as was the incorporation of pips into the illustrations as faces (Three of Spades, Four of Hearts, Two of Diamonds) and clothing (Four of Diamonds). The double-ended and coloured court cards depict fierce looking men as the Kings, ancient Roman goddesses on the Queen cards, and armed young men with plumed hats as the Jacks.



Original watercolours with gold highlights

65 C.L.
[Watercolour and gold manuscript cards].
Publication [England, 1850].
Description 52 manuscript playing-cards in original colour wash with gold highlights, versos blank.
Dimensions 105 by 77mm (4.25 by 3 inches).

These beautiful manuscript playing-cards depict a range of mythological and historical characters. The full-length court cards include figures that appear to represent sixteenth century royalty (King and Queen of Diamonds), a Biblical king (King of Hearts), an ancient hero (Jack of Hearts) and a later soldier with a gun (Jack of Diamonds). Each character wears sumptuously-coloured clothing, and each card is framed by an intricate border. The four Ace cards bear their respective suit symbols at the centre accompanied by features such as a dog, fairy or decorative pattern. On the Ace of Spades, the cards have been signed “C.L. 1850”.



Prototype court cards

66 CLERGET, C[harles] E[rnest]

[Manuscript court cards in Paris pattern].

Publication
 [Paris, mid-nineteenth century].

Description
 12 manuscript court cards with original hand-colour, versos blank, one with short tear to one corner.

Dimensions
 92 by 62mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

Prototype manuscript court cards by Parisian artist, engraver and lithographer Charles Ernest Clerget, whose name appears on the King of Clubs. Active during the early- to mid-nineteenth centuries, Clerget was much inspired by Islamic art, as well as the Italian old masters. The present deck of cards, however, is in the traditional Paris pattern, with the double-ended court cards representing different historical and mythological figures. Interestingly, only Caesar (King of Diamonds) is identified here by name. Likewise only Pallas, the Queen of Spades, has a medallion, and it shows a dog; this motif features on the same card in a number of decks, and may represent fierceness, loyalty or vigilance.



Proof cards for Paris pattern deck

67 [CLERGET, Charles Ernest, or after]

[Manuscript cards in Paris pattern].

Publication
 [France or Britain, mid-nineteenth century].

Description
 Five manuscript playing-cards with original hand-colour, versos blank, Ace of Diamonds on paper.

Dimensions
 103 by 73mm (4 by 2.75 inches).

References
 Verame (2007) p93.

This small collection of manuscript court cards and Aces are similar to those published by Clerget in Paris in the mid-nineteenth century (item 66). The two Kings present here - Charlemagne as the King of Hearts and Caesar as the King of Diamonds - are almost identical to those in Clerget's prototypes, except that Caesar now has a medallion showing a rooster's head, and Charlemagne is named ("Charles"). The Queen of Diamonds is a different design to her counterpart in Clerget's set, although very similarly illustrated in style. The two other cards here, the Aces of Clubs and Diamonds, are both presented as armorial shields with their pip mark at the centre. The Ace of Clubs is set within a design that clearly represents the heraldry of the British crown: the shield is flanked by a lion and unicorn; beneath it is a rose and above it a crowned helmet with various military standards in the background, including the Union Jack. It is therefore not clear whether these proof cards were made by an English artist, designed for the British market, or simply represent further exploration by Clerget himself as he developed cards for a future deck.



Bavarian history cards

68 GÖBL, Caj[etan]

[German-suited Playing-Cards].

Publication
Munich, Caj[etan] Göbl, [c1850].

Description
36 engraved cards with original hand-colour, pink floral design to versos, contemporary ink tax stamp to the Eight of Hearts.

Dimensions
97 by 53mm (3.75 by 2 inches).

German-suited cards by Cajetan Göbl, son of cardmaker Ignaz Cajetan and grandson of Andreas Benedict Göbl, who continued in the family trade in Munich from 1831 to 1866. The Acorns, Bells, Hearts and Leaves are accompanied by vignettes of historic Bavarians figures and events. These are identified on the Six of each suit. For example, the Six of Acorns gives the following key:

- Ace - Free Bavaria submits to the German Empire under Duke Arnulf
- King - Duke Henry the Lion
- Over-knave - Landgrave Gebhard of Leuchtenberg
- Under-knave - a farmer
- X - Duke Odilo is killed by the Franks
- IX - Divine judgement
- VIII - The castle buildings and the feudal lords
- VII - Devastation of war



Lesache cards with red and white pips

69 LESACHE, E.
[Deck with red and white pips].
Publication
[France], E. Lesache, [mid-nineteenth century].
Description
40 manuscript playing-cards in original pen and black ink and colour wash, versos blank.
Dimensions
84 by 56mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

Made by E. Lesache, possibly the illustrator Emile Eugene Lesache, this deck features brightly-coloured double-ended court cards with realistically-drawn faces. Interestingly, the suit marks for the Hearts and Diamonds are white rather than red on the court cards, while the Aces each feature a single pip mark in the traditional red or black, surrounded by decorative curlicues.



The King's cards

70 [CASSITTO, Giovanni]

[*Carte del Re*].

Publication
Naples, Fabbrica dei fogli a contorno, [1851].

Description
39 engraved cards with fine original hand-colour, contemporary ink tax stamp to Four of Coins, blue woodcut fish design to verso, without King of Coins.

Dimensions
83 by 55mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

In the mid-nineteenth century, Naples was part of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, and ruled by King Ferdinand II of Bourbon. The present deck of playing-cards is entitled ‘Cards of the King’ in reference to Ferdinand. Following traditional Italian design, the cards are categorised into the four suits of Clubs, Coins, Cups and Swords, and the face cards consist of a Fane (Jack), Cavallo (Knight) and Re (King). The value of the number cards is indicated by the number of objects illustrated on them.



Red and white

71 [GATTEAUX, Nicholas Marie]

[Red and white French pattern cards].

Publication
[France], 1853.

Description
32 engraved playing-cards with orginal hand-colour, blue geometric pattern to versos.

Dimensions
83 by 53mm (3.25 by 2 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p56.

In 1813, engraver and sculptor Nicholas Marie Gatteaux published a new design for playing-cards, with specifically-placed pip marks on the number cards and a new set of single-figure court cards based on the traditional Paris pattern. These cards were adopted as the official French pattern for just 14 years, until in 1827 he designed a new set of double-ended court cards, as here. The present example of Gatteaux’s deck is a prototype experimenting with colour: the number cards show white pips against a red background, and likewise on the court cards the character, suit symbol and caption are left blank, while the background and a large suit symbol in the centre of the figure have been painted red. It does not seem that such a design ever went into large-scale production.



Cards for Union Soldiers

72 HITCHCOCK, Benj[amin]

Union Cards.

Publication
New York, American Publishing Agency, 1862.

Description
53 chromolithographed playing-cards, including title-card, two stars and stripe flags to verso.

Dimensions
90 by 64mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

In 1862, Benjamin W. Hitchcock registered two new deck of cards with the New York Clerk’s Office: ‘Union Cards’, as here, and ‘National Emblems’. Hitchcock owned the American Publishing Agency of 14 Chambers St., New York, which produced sheet music, books, musical instruments, printing presses and type; he also seems to have considered himself an expert on the Civil War, publishing ‘Hitchcock’s chronological record of the American civil war’ four years later.

Both ‘National Emblems’ and ‘Union Cards’ appear to have been distributed in Northeastern America exclusively by the Bufford lithography house from 1863. John Henry Bufford was a lithographer based in Boston, Massachusetts from 1829 to 1870. His output was varied, producing sheet music, views, illustrations and portraits. Bufford’s sons took over the firm after his death, expanding the enterprises to the nearby major cities of New York and Chicago. The stamp on the slipcase here identifies the printers as “Bufford’s Print Publishing House”; although the firm does not ever seem to have had this as its official name, other publications from the 1860s also bear this imprint.

Designed for Union Army soldiers, Hitchcock’s Union Cards have new, patriotic suits - Eagles, Shields, Stars and Flags - and the court cards now show identical Colonels, Goddesses of Liberty, and Majors in the place of Kings, Queens and Jacks. On the Ace of Eagles, the illustration of the bird is surrounded by the maker’s inscription, headed by the title, and carrying further information about the deck’s registration at the city office.



The Ace of Eagles

73 [HITCHCOCK, Benjamin]

National Emblems.

Publication
[New York], American Card Company,
[1862].

Description
52 chromolithographed playing-cards,
blue design to versos, housed in original
publisher's printed cardboard slipcase torn
with loss of the upper half.

Dimensions
90 by 68mm (3.5 by 2.75 inches).

Alongside his 'Union Cards', Benjamin Hitchcock published 'National Emblems' during the American Civil War. Designed for Union Army soldiers and their families, Hitchcock was "confident that the introduction of National Emblems in the place of Foreign, in Playing Cards, will be hailed with delight by the American People, take pleasure in presenting the Union Playing Cards as the first and only Genuine American Cards ever produced, in the fullest confidence that the time is not far distant when they will be the leading card in the American market".

The traditional French suits have been replaced with Eagles, Shields, Stars and Flags, and the court cards now show identical Colonels, Goddesses of Liberty, and Majors in the place of Kings, Queens and Jacks. The Ace of Eagles is the only pip card with an illustration, depicting an eagle perched, wings spread, atop an empty cage, bearing in its mouth a banner reading "e pluribus unum", the traditional motto and animal of the United States. The backs of the cards present the Union shield and flag, with an anchor representing stability, set against a geometric pattern.



The giant takes flight

74 [ANONYMOUS]

Le Géant.

Publication
[Probably Paris, c1863].

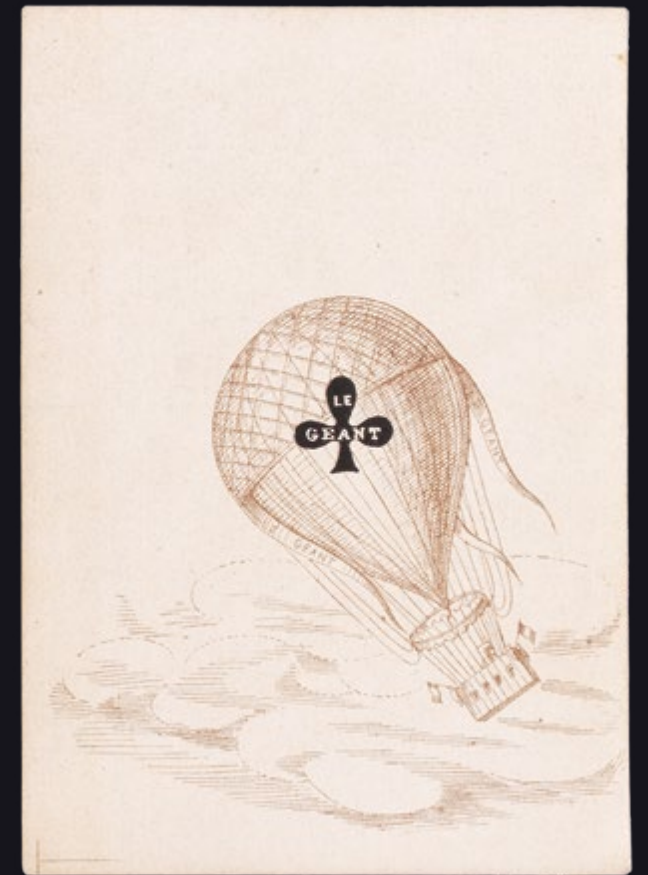
Description
52 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, pink versos, housed in original publisher's printed slipcase, left flap separated at fold, without the lower panel.

Dimensions
122 by 85mm (4.75 by 3.25 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p243.

In 1863, Felix Nadar's great hot air balloon, *Le Géant*, was launched from the Champ de Mars in Paris. *Le Géant* inspired Jules Verne to pen 'Five Weeks in a Balloon', and perhaps also the maker of the present deck of cards. With an illustration of the balloon serving as both the Ace of Clubs in the transformation deck, and as the title image, the cards may have been designed as a souvenir of the flight.

The rest of the cards, on which the pip symbols have been incorporated into the design, do not follow the theme of aerial navigation, however, but some do show various scenes of amusement and entertainment, such as a tight-rope walker and theatrical shows. There are also more everyday scenes, with cards showing churches and shops, as well as rather absurd illustrations of anthropomorphic insects and exotic figures worshipping a demon. The overarching theme of the transformation deck is not at all clear. Furthermore, the court cards show full-length figures of sumptuously adorned royal characters, the suit symbols on the King and Queen cards set against an armorial shield. On the Five of Spades, the text "L'Union Fait la Force" alludes to the Belgian fight for its independence in 1830.



A wine-lover's deck

75 [AUSALDI, Giorgio]

Viva Roi.

Publication
[Turin], 1867.

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with original
hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
84 by 52mm (3.25 by 2 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p114.

This suits of this deck have been adapted to suit its oenophilic theme; in the place of the traditional Spades, Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs the 52 cards are now categorised as Bottles, Cups, Corkscrews and Funnels. Small illustrations of these objects serve as the pip symbols, with which the number cards are identified. The face cards show brightly painted, full-length figures holding the articles and, in some cases, enjoying a drink of wine. The Ace cards each have a single example of the pip mark and a different caption in Piedmontese:

- Viva Roi (Long live the king)
- Viva 'l carlevè (Long live carnival)
- Viva 'l Rabel (Long live noise)
- Fiera d' Gianduia (The Gianduia fair)

The deck was made to commemorate the Turin Carnival of 1867. The event consisted of parades, performances of Commedia dell'Arte plays and, naturally, lots of drinking. Gianduia is one of the characters from Commedia dell'Arte and serves as the official 'mask', or symbol, of Turin and the Piedmont region, playing a central role in the annual celebration.





Jean Hachette transformation cards

76 F[ROMMANN], M[aximilian]

[Jean Hachette - Jeu à Transformation].

Publication
[Darmstadt, Frommann & Bunte, 1870].

Description
52 chromolithographed playing-cards, pink pattern to versos.

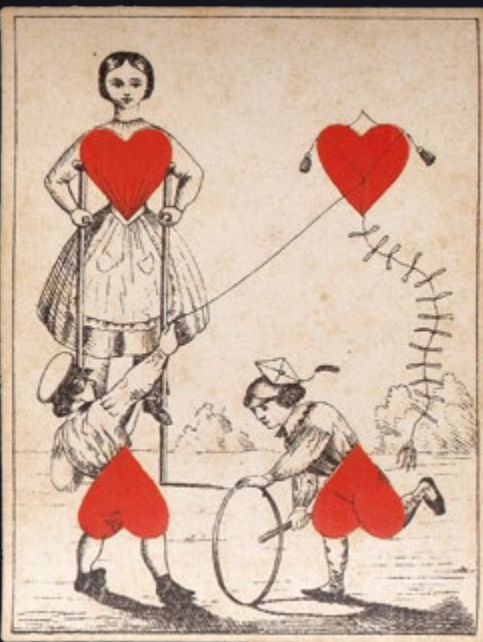
Dimensions
89 by 65mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

Maximilian Joseph Frommann (1813-1866) was an illustrator and cardmaker based in Darmstadt, Germany. After his death, his children together for six years to manage their late father's affairs, and later both went on to publish their own decks of playing-cards. His daughter Anna started a publishing business with her husband Georg Bunte, under the name Frommann & Bunte, while his son Friedrich formed his own firm with Friedrich Morian, named Frommann & Morian.

Published under the title 'Jeanne l'Hachette', the present deck of cards is loosely centred around the siege of Beauvais, which occurred in 1472. The daughter of a peasant nicknamed after her weapon of choice, Jeanne l'Hachette defended her city from the troops of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. Jeanne herself is shown on the Queen of Spades, axe in hand. The other court cards show a range of single-figure characters, some from the story and some quite unrelated.

The pip cards are examples of the transformation style that was growing in popularity during the nineteenth century. They are more simplistic than earlier examples, with the suit marks incorporated into the image while still retaining their characteristic shapes. The light-hearted illustrations, which often include a dose of humour, show a stark contrast with the more stiff and formal German cards of the time.

Several makers issued 'Jean Hachette' cards during the 1860s and 1870s, using the same court cards but a variety of number cards. The Grimaud firm in Paris, and Braun & Schneider in Munich, along with Frommann himself, all published similar decks, and there is an ongoing debate about who was responsible for the original design.



Bourgeois playing-cards

77 [ROBERT after JANET-LANGE, probably]

Le Bourgeois.

Publication
Paris, [c1870s].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards with fine original hand-colour.

Dimensions
85 by 56mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

In the mid-nineteenth century a number of decks of playing-cards were published, generally under the title ‘Cartes Parisiennes’, which showed characters in beautiful costumes. O. Gilbert, whose company was located on the Rue des Signes 3, was the most prominent of the cardmakers behind the Cartes Parisiennes, producing a series of decks showing a range of wonderful formalwear. In 1848, the artist Ange-Louis Janet, known by his pseudonym Janet-Langem, designed a deck for “Le Caméléon, ou le Propagateur des Modes”; the face cards are depicted as elegant and attractive figures wearing the latest fashion, which was presumably available at Le Caméléon.

The present deck is identical to Janet-Lange’s work, except that each card is now captioned “Le Bourgeois, Fabricant Rue de la Banque, Paris”. Through the mid-nineteenth century, this address was the headquarters of the prominent Crédit Mobilier bank which suffered during and after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 to 1871. Indeed, a city directory of 1872 lists a silk and satin merchant named Robert operating at the address. The cards may have been commissioned by Robert to advertise fabrics for such splendid garments, although it seems strange choice to have labelled the fashions “bourgeois”. While the word was less heavily-loaded in the nineteenth century, it was beginning to acquire some negative connotations.

Furthermore, the Ace cards have also changed, and now portray two inverse landscape vignettes showing popular haunts of wealthy Parisians, namely the “cascade du Boulogne”, “Parc Monceaux”, “Jardins des plantes”, “Buttes-Chaumont”, “[Jardin du] Luxembourg”, “Grand Trianon”, “Jardin d’Acclim[atati]on” and “Musee de Cluny”.



Prototype pattern - full-length

78 [LESACHE, Emile Eugene, probably]

[Court cards in English pattern - full-length].

Publication
 [Paris, nineteenth century].

Description
 12 manuscript court cards with original hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
 88 by 55mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

References
 Verame (2007) p92.

Descended from the traditional Rouen pattern, the English pattern is actually characterised by mistakes. The 12 court cards are made up of the traditional Kings, Queens and Jacks, wearing elaborate sixteenth century courtly garments. The Kings and their foot-soldiers, the Jacks, all carry medieval arms. These features are typical of the Rouen pattern. However, as English cardmakers continued to copy older cards, errors began to creep into their designs: the axe originally held by the King of Hearts in the Rouen pattern became so blurred that it transformed into a sword hilt. Furthermore, the King of Diamonds is facing away from his axe, which is aimed at the back of his own head. This feature won the card the rather dark nickname of “The Suicide King”.

The 12 court cards present here appear to be prototypes made in an attempt to modernise and improve the English standard pattern. They may have been created by the illustrator Emile Eugene Lesache, with a design similar to De La Rue’s famous “One Shilling” cards published in London throughout the nineteenth century.



Prototype pattern - double-ended

79 [LESACHE, Emile Eugene, probably]

[Court cards in English pattern - double-ended].

Publication
 [Paris, nineteenth century].

Description
 12 manuscript court cards with original hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
 95 by 64mm (3.75 by 2.5 inches).

It appears that Lesache’s process of designing a new deck of cards in the English pattern led him to create prototype court cards of both the full-length and double-ended variety. The royal characters illustrated on the present court cards are identical to his full-length designs (item 78) except that they are here double-ended. Since there is no evidence of a printed deck of cards created by Lesache, it is not known for which version of the court cards he opted, if indeed he did produce a printed deck.



Apache rawhide playing-cards

80 [ANONYMOUS APACHE CRAFTSMAN]

[Painted playing-cards on rawhide].

Publication
[Northern Mexico, late-nineteenth century].

Description
19 painted rawhide cards, versos blank.

Dimensions
68 by 47mm (2.75 by 1.75 inches).

When European explorers and later colonisers came to the Americas, they brought with them, among other things, playing-cards. This new form of recreation proved popular among the native Americans, including the Apaches of Central America. During the nineteenth century, the Apache Nation was divided, with some content to live peacefully alongside new American settlers, and those who were determined to fight for authority in their own lands. The former had access to manufactured playing-cards imported or produced by the European settlers, while the latter, who were subsequently pushed into the mountains of south-west New Mexico, did not. As a result, they began to make their own playing-cards.

Lack of resources such as paper led them to use rawhide as the medium for their cards, which were then painted with either native vegetable dyes or commercial paint bought from traders. Designs incorporated a mix of their own cultural imagery and the European traditional patterns. The vast majority of the known native leather decks were made by members of the Apache Nation, and of these (there are around 40) all but one are based on the Spanish system. The present deck, for example, clearly shows the suits of Clubs, Cups, Coins and Swords, as well as the court cards of Sota (jack), Caballo (knight) and Rey (king).





A mysterious export

81 FRANZ, J. H.

Spielkarten Fabrik von J.H. Franz & Co.

Publication
Maastricht, J.H. Franz & Co., [c1880].

Description
52 engraved playing-cards printed in colours, versos blank, original publishers decorative paper wrapper.

Dimensions
95 by 67mm (3.75 by 2.75 inches).

References
<https://www.the-saleroom.com/en-gb/auction-catalogues/southgate-auctions/catalogue-id-southg10091/lot-fea78195-c60c-495b-b0e0-ae3100a47f36>.

A mysterious deck of cards in the English pattern, with single-figure court cards and number cards, with the number of pips representing the cards’ values. On the Ace of Spades, which is the only card to have a decorative pip mark, the manufacturer is given: “fabrique de J.H. Franz & Co. Maastricht a/M”. Historical records from the late-nineteenth and the early-twentieth centuries mention a Dutch J.H. Franz associated with various professions, including engineering and typesetting, but there do not appear to be any documenting him as a cardmaker, nor is there mention of the firm of J.H. Franz and Co..

The same company, or “Spielkarten Fabrik”, appears on the deck’s wrapper, which features a portrait of a man wearing a turban, an embroidered cloak, and a fur collar. Although lacking here, the wrapper originally had an additional side, which would have covered the back of the sealed deck. This featured an illustration of a camel at its centre and was covered in Georgian writing stating that the cards were exported to English territories and sold by the Gillespie company. An 1873 directory lists Alex M. Gillespie & Co. as an export merchant for books, stationery and paper goods; records from 1884 show that the firm then went bankrupt. The number of languages featured on the deck - French, German and Georgian, with a reference to an English company - makes for a rather intriguing item.



Oval character cards

82 GÜNTHEL, Friedrich

[Ovale Spielkarten].

Publication
Leipzig, A. Twietmeyer, [c1880].

Description
32 oval chromolithographed playing-cards, pink floral pattern to versos, housed in original publisher's patterned cardboard slipcase, gilt edge.

Dimensions
102 by 67mm (4 by 2.75 inches).

With illustrations by Fedor Flinzer, an eighteenth century German artist nicknamed the “Raphael of Cats”, these oval cards were made by Leipzig-based cardmaker Friedrich Günthel, who published several oval decks in the late-nineteenth century, on the debatable grounds that they were easier to shuffle and hold. The present deck has the traditional German suits of Acorns, Bells, Hearts and Leaves, each of which has a theme to its court cards, namely countrymen, townsmen, scholars and artists:

- Acorns - hunter, herder, farmer
- Bells - soldier, craftsman, shopkeeper
- Hearts - lawyer, doctor, teacher
- Leaves - musician, painter, poet

Both court cards and number cards are double-ended, while the Aces have a single suit symbol flanked by banners reading “Daus”.





“the exciting features which will occur at the approaching Republican and Democratic National Conventions”

83 SMITH, L. Lum

Political Euchre.

Publication
[Philadelphia,] 1884.

Description
53 colour-printed playing-cards, including joker, green decoration to versos.

Dimensions
88 by 63mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

A notice in ‘The Publishers Weekly’ of 1884 advertises that its editor, “L. Lum Smith, 912 Arch St., Philadelphia, announces a new game of cards to be called ‘Political Euchre’, which is to portray the exciting features which will occur at the approaching Republican and Democratic National Conventions in Chicago, and the presidential elections later on. The names of the States, with their electoral [sic] votes, and Territories are printed on regular size playing-cards, and four other cards (making 52 in all) represent the coming Republican and Democratic nominees, and these cards do the duty of right and left bowers. Republican States printed in blue, Democratic in red. Color of the card turned at the end of deal makes the trump. Game played the same as euchre. The price of a single packet will be 50c.; per doz. \$4”.

The 25th presidential election resulted in a slim Democratic victory, with Grover Cleveland winning 4,914,482 popular votes to his opponent, James Blaine’s, 4,856,905. In Smith’s deck, Cleveland appears on the Jack of Hearts, and Blaine on the Jack of Spades; the portraits of both are accompanied by the results of the 1880 election, while a reduced version of the traditional Jack card is found beneath. Their respective VPs, Thomas Hendricks and John Logan, are featured as the Jacks of Diamonds and Clubs. As promised in the advertisement, each of the other cards is dedicated to a state, with its population, number of electoral votes, and its typical political leanings written on it. In 1884, there were officially 38 states; thus in this deck Hawaii and Oklahoma are omitted, North and South Dakota are represented by the single “Dakota Ter[itory]”, and “New Mexico Ter[itory]” and “Montana Ter[itory]” and “Indian Ter[itory]” all appear.

Smith went on to create another deck of playing-cards, also called ‘Political Euchre’, for the following presidential election in 1888. He also became known as “the foe of quacks and frauds”, as he devoted much of his career to exposing con-men and their fraudulent products.



Transformation cards for Victoria's jubilee

84 [ANONYMOUS]

[Golden Jubilee transformation cards].

Publication
[Probably London], 1887.

Description
52 engraved cards with original hand-colour, versos blank.

Dimensions
90 by 63mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee was celebrated in June 1887 with numerous events taking place across London and the Empire. All sorts of souvenirs were made to commemorate the Queen's fifty years on the throne, including plates, medals, stamps and playing-cards. The present deck is an example of the latter, with the enthroned Victoria featuring as the Queen of Diamonds, and a figure on the Seven of Diamonds holding a sign announcing the event. The scenes depicted on the rest of the cards, on which the pip symbols have been incorporated into the design, show a large range of activities and characters associated with Victorian life. The Six of Spades shows early rugby players at the game, the Eight of Hearts depicts a theatrical performance, and the Four of Clubs presents two men trying to ride penny farthings to the amusement of their spectators.



“Coon” Cards

85 HARTLEY BROS

Sutherland’s Circular Coon Cards.

Publication
Melbourne, Hartley Bros, [late-nineteenth century].

Description
53 circular lithographed playing-cards, including one joker, Ace of Spades illustrated with a portrait taken from a photograph, red design to versos, housed in original publisher’s metal case.

Dimensions
Diameter 78mm (3 inches).

Seen as light-hearted and comic collectables and souvenirs at the turn of the twentieth century, “coon” cards were greetings cards, postcards and, as here, playing-cards that caricatured African-Americans. While most cards in the present deck are only unusual for their circular shape, the Ace of Spades shows a printed photographic image of a young African-American boy eating a watermelon, while on the joker another African-American man is leering beside captions that read “I am the Joker” and “As black as the Ace of Spades”. The deck was printed in Melbourne, Australia by the Hartley Bros printing company, who are not known to have produced any other playing-cards.



Reversé cards

86 M. N.
[Question and answer cards].

Publication
[France, c1890].

Description
31 lithographed playing-cards, printed in colours, pink to versos, without King of Diamonds.

Dimensions
93 by 58mm (3.75 by 2.25 inches).

Forming a call-and-response game or a divination deck, each card here is double-ended, with a word or phrase at either end allowing the players to put together a miniature conversation or scenario. Words and phrases such as “facheuse suprise” (unfortunate surprise) and “cadeau” (gift) are to be matched with options including “veuve qui vous trompe” (a widow who cheats on you) and “bonheur en amour” (happiness in love).

The two options on each card are accompanied by a brightly-coloured illustration of one or more characters, such as a clown wandering along the street or an elegantly dressed lady offering a bag of money to a child in rags. If a game, the winner of each round may be the one who offers the most amusing response to the card initially dealt; if intended for divination, the cards may reveal the participants’ fates.

The initials “M.N.” appear on the Queen of Clubs, and on the Nine of Clubs there is a signature starting with these two letters, but it has not been possible to trace the maker.



Kintoki-bana playing-cards

87 [OISHI TENGUDO]
[Kintoki-bana cards].

Publication
[Kyoto, Oishi Tengudo, [probably late-nineteenth century].

Description
49 playing-cards, including additional card, hand-painted on wood.

Dimensions
53 by 32mm (2 by 1.25 inches).

A regional variant of hanafuda, kintoki-bana is played in the province of Awa and the Okayama prefecture of Japan. The design is distinguished by the writing on several cards: some cards name the month represented by their suit, while others have very short extracts of classical waka poetry in calligraphic writing. Most of the cards are numbered, and the intricate designs are strikingly coloured in red, orange, yellow and black ink. The deck contains an additional card depicting Kintaro, a child hero from traditional Japanese folklore.

The deck was manufactured by the Oishi Tengudo cardmaking company which initially marauded as a rice-selling company when started in 1800, in order to avoid the penalties associated with gambling during the Edo period. Although the market for Japanese playing-cards is now dominated by Nintendo, Oishi Tengudo continues to sell handmade playing-cards for hanafuda and other traditional games including go and karuta.



1893 World's Fair cards

88 CLARK, G. W.

Columbian Souvenir Playing Cards.

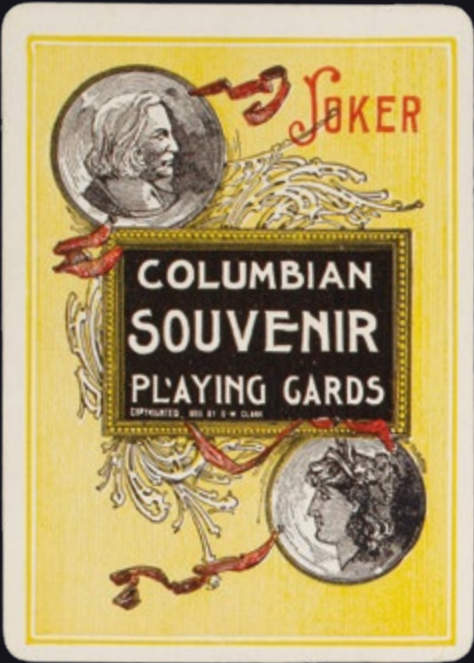
Publication
[Chicago, Columbian Souvenir Playing-Card Company, 1893].

Description
54 chromolithographed playing-cards, including joker and blank, blue decoration to versos, housed in original publisher's engraved metal tin.

Dimensions
88 by 63mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

A souvenir of the Chicago World Fair in 1893, which celebrated the 400th anniversary of Columbus's arrival to the Americas, lasted six months, attracted 27 million visitors, and took place within 200 newly-constructed temporary buildings across 600 acres. Each of the cards depicts a different building from the fair, with the Ace of Diamonds showing the Palace of Fine Arts, which survives today as the Museum of Science and Industry. The suit marks are shown in the upper right- and lower left-hand corners, while on the opposite sides appear a miniature version of the playing-card. Bold text at the top and bottom of each card identifies its value. On the back of the cards is an illustration of Columbus and his crew disembarking from their boats on the American shore. The two jokers show medallions of the explorer's royal patrons, Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.

Each card in the deck bears the imprint "Copyrighted 1893 by G.W. Clark". There appears to be only one other deck attributed to G.W. Clark, published in North Carolina in 1936. It shows verses by the Persian poet Omar Khayyam, whose work was experiencing something of a revival in fin-de-siècle America.



Babes in the Wood

89 [TOMPKINS, Eugene]

[*Babes in the Wood Playing-Cards*].

Publication
Boston, 1893.

Description
54 colour-printed playing-cards, including
joker and title-card, sepia decoration to
versos, three cards trimmed within image.

Dimensions
88 by 63mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

The traditional English children's tale of 'Babes in the Wood' was taken to the American stage in the late-nineteenth century, with a 13-week run at the Boston Theatre from 1892 to 1893. For its 75th performance, theatre manager Eugene Tompkins commissioned a commemorative deck of playing-cards to be given out to attendees. The number cards show the typical pip design, but on the court cards full-length coloured figures depict characters from the show, including clowns and dancers. The cast included the young Victor Moore, who would go on to be a Broadway star in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the lead of the Christmas-classics, 'It Happened on 5th Avenue'.



Miniature Italian cards

90 COSTANZI, A.

Carte Giocattoli.

Publication
Rome, A. Costanzi, [c1895].

Description
34 miniature chromolithographed playing-cards, blue geometric pattern to versos, some tears to versos.

Dimensions
42 by 26mm (1.75 by 1 inches).

A 1895 directory lists A. Costanzi as a cardmaker and ‘chincaglierie’ (trinket-seller) active at Via Arenula, Rome. Costanzi published the present deck of miniature playing-cards using the traditional Italian suits of Clubs, Coins, Cups and Swords, with the court cards depicting the Fante (knave), Cavallo (knight) and Re (king), here presented as medieval figures. The value of the number cards is represented by the number of pips illustrated on each one. The maker’s name and address appear on the Four of Coins, and the Ace of Coins is flanked by a janiform eagle.



Hustling Joe

91 UNITED STATES PLAYING CARD COMPANY

Hustling Joe.

Publication
Cincinnati, United States Playing Card Company, [1895].

Description
53 chromolithographed playing-cards, including joker, additional Queen of Diamonds, without Queen of Spades, double-ended black-and-white design to verso, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard slipcase, one flap torn at the fold.

Dimensions
88 by 62mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

The United States Playing Card Company was established in 1867 as a large manufacturer and distributor of many different brands of playing-cards and other gaming paraphernalia, such as poker chips. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the firm published the present deck of 'Husting Joe' cards. Hustling Joe himself appears on the Ace of Spades in a red jester's costume; immediately after the first edition of the deck was published, a second edition was issued with corrections made and Joe's costume in yellow.

A rather bizarre deck, the cards are filled with weird and wonderful scenes and characters, even on the backs of the cards, where a double-ended scene shows gnomes ice-skating in the moonlight. The court cards are a mix of the traditional (Queen of Hearts) and intriguing (King of Spades), while on the number cards the pip marks are overlaid on the background image in a style known as semi-transformation. The illustrations include a range of everyday scenes such as a man being shaved by a barber and a butcher carving some meat, as well as theatrical and circus-themed images.



Wüst miniature deck

92 WÜST, C[onrad] L[udwig]

[Miniature cards].

Publication
Frankfurt, C. L. Wüst, [c1900].

Description
52 miniature engraved playing-cards, with original hand-colour, pink to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard slipcase, pen trials.

Dimensions
34 by 26mm (1.25 by 1 inches).

From the late-nineteenth century, cardmakers began to produce miniature decks of playing-cards, either as novelties, for children or as travel sets. One such maker to pick up on this trend was the prolific C.L. Wüst of Frankfurt, who published the present deck around the turn of the twentieth century. The French-suited deck has the value of the number and Ace cards represented by the number of pip marks on each; the company's trademark is found on the Four of Hearts. The double-ended court cards show typical royal figures, with the Kings portrayed as noble, bearded men with crowns and sceptres, the Queens wearing voluminous and brightly-coloured dresses, and the Jacks bearing a range of weapons.



Actual size

Miniature Paris pattern

93 [ANONYMOUS]

[Miniature Paris pattern cards].

Publication
[France, c1900].

Description
30 woodblock miniature playing-cards with original hand-colour, original publisher's decorative paper wrapper.

Dimensions
46 by 35mm (1.75 by 1.5 inches).

A miniature deck of cards in the Paris Pattern. The cards are very similar to items 94 and 95, suggesting that an unidentified printing company may have offered a standard deck of miniature cards to multiple companies for promotional purposes, perhaps with the option to personalise by adding their trade card to the set. The original wrapper in which this deck is housed shows the King of Diamonds, depicting Julius Caesar.



Actual size

Miniature Paris pattern

94 [ANONYMOUS]

[Miniature Paris pattern Playing-Cards].

Publication
[France, c1900].

Description
32 miniature woodblock playing-cards with original hand-colour, original publisher's decorative paper wrapper.

Dimensions
49 by 37mm (2 by 1.5 inches).

A miniature deck of playing-cards in the Paris pattern with double-ended court cards representing notable historical and mythological figures. The original wrapper in which the deck is housed depicts Charlemagne as the King of Hearts.



Actual size

Chicory cards

95 ARLATTE & CO.

[Miniature deck of cards with promotional trade card].

Publication
[France, c1900].

Description
32 miniature woodblock playing-cards with original hand-colour, publisher's logo to versos, original publisher's decorative paper wrapper.

Dimensions
46 by 37mm (1.75 by 1.5 inches).

A miniature deck of cards advertising Chicorée Bleu-Argent, a French chicory coffee substitute manufactured and promoted by Arlatte & Co. during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The cards are in the Paris pattern with double-ended court cards representing notable historical and mythological figures. The original wrapper in which the deck is housed shows Julius Caesar as the King of Diamonds. An additional card promoting Chicorée Bleu-Argent is included. The cards are very similar to items 93 and 94, suggesting that an unidentified printing company may have offered a standard deck of miniature cards to multiple companies for promotional purposes, adding in their trade card.



Actual size

Radicke-ly miniature deck

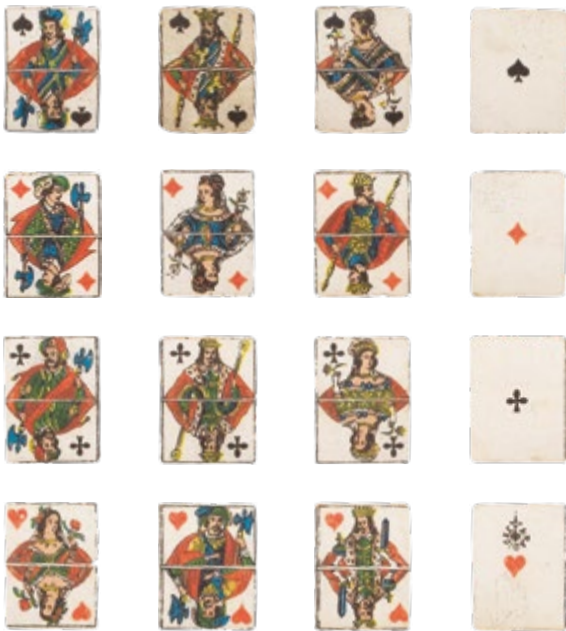
96 RADICKE, A.
[Miniature Playing-Cards].

Publication
[Germany, early twentieth century].

Description
31 miniature engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, versos blank, without the Nine of Hearts.

Dimensions
17 by 13mm (75 by 5 inches).

An extremely miniature deck of playing-cards with double-ended court cards that do not seem to follow any prominent pattern. While all the Queens hold flowers as in the English pattern, all the Jacks are armed with axes, as in the Swiss pattern. On the Ace of Hearts the maker’s trademark appears, reading “A. Radicke”. Merchants by the name Radicke are listed as active in Germany in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, when it is likely this deck was made, but none of them seem to be associated with card making.



Actual size

Miniature scenic playing-cards

97 WÜST, C[onrad] L[udwig]
[Miniature scenic Playing-Cards].

Publication
Frankfurt, C.L. Wüst, [c1900].

Description
50 miniature engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, later Seven of Diamonds and Jack of Clubs in hand-coloured manuscript, blue pattern to versos, housed in original cardboard slipcase.

Dimensions
17 by 12mm (.75 by .5 inches).

A miniature deck of cards published by C.L. Wüst at the turn of the twentieth century. The double-ended court cards show the typical royal figures in fine and brightly-coloured clothes. Each of the Ace cards shows two scenic vignettes, in a style typical of Wüst decks. These include a man fishing by a river, a young boy at his lessons, and a woman reading.



Actual size

Miniature cards for Switzerland

98 WÜST, C[onrad] L[udwig]

[Miniature cards].

Publication
Frankfurt, C.L. Wüst, [c1900].

Description
52 miniature engraved playing-cards, with original hand-colour, versos pink, housed in original publisher's cardboard printed slipcase.

Dimensions
35 by 24mm (1.5 by 1 inches).

A further example of C.L. Wüst's miniature deck of playing-cards from the turn of the twentieth century, for a description of which see item 92. The present deck was for sale to the Swiss market, as the Ace of Hearts card bears a stamp from the Canton of Bern, showing that the import charge of 50 centimes had been paid.



Actual size

Hanafuda cards

99 [ANONYMOUS]

[Traditional hanafuda cards].

Publication
[Japan, late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century].

Description
48 playing-cards, with original hand-colour, backed on black-painted wood, housed in original wooden cube box.

Dimensions
56 by 33mm (2.25 by 1.25 inches).
Cards: 56 x 33mm.
Box: 48 x 64 x 41 (h x w x d).

Early Japanese playing-cards reflect the European decks that were brought into the country by Portuguese explorers in the sixteenth century. After Japan closed its borders in 1633, however, foreign playing-cards were banned, and the government regularly censored whichever Japanese decks had recently become popular in the underground world of gambling. As a result, a huge variety of regional playing-cards emerged as persistent gamblers continued to produce new decks. During the nineteenth century, the hanafuda deck rose to prominence; its 48 cards are divided into twelve suits representing the months of the years and represented by a flower. Each suit has just four cards, depicting either a feature of nature, such as a swallow or lightning, or a man-made object such as a sake cup.



Actual size

Boer war cards

100 WÜST, C[onrad] L[udwig]

Transvaal-kaart.

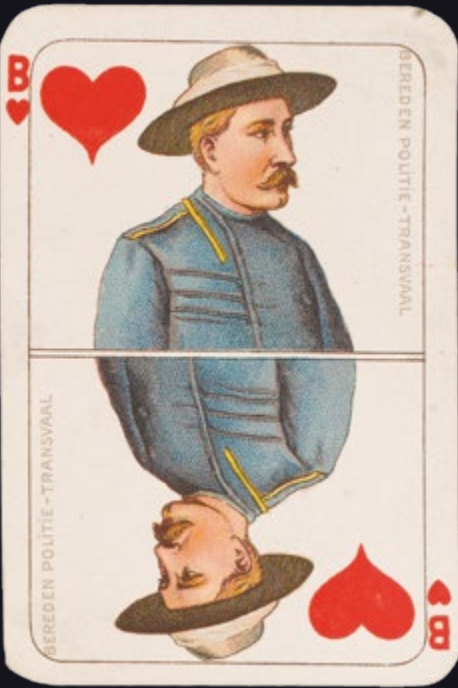
Publication
Frankfurt, C.L. Wüst, [c1900].

Description
52 chromolithographed playing-cards, green armorial design to versos, all corners gilt, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard case.

Dimensions
91 by 62mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

Fought from 1899 to 1902 between the British Empire and the Boer republics, the Boer War resulted in a British victory, with the South African Republic and Orange Free State ultimately dissolved and their lands absorbed into the Empire. During the conflict C.L. Wüst published a deck of cards showing key figures on the court cards, and scenes from the Trans-vaal on the double-ended Aces. Being a German firm, C.L. Wüst was likely in support of the Boer struggle; indeed, on the box in which the cards were packaged and sold is an allegorical vignette of an angel watching over a cavalry man holding the flag of the South African Republic.

On each of the King cards is a portrait of a Dutch leader - Paul Kruger, Piet Cronjé, Piet Joubert and Martinus Steyn; on the Queens are representations of women from four of the major ethnic groups in the region, namely the Matabele, Zulu, Swazi and Bantu peoples; the Jack cards display portraits of the different types of men involved in the war, including a police cavalryman from each of the republics, an artillery man and naturally, a Transvaal Boer. The vignettes on the Ace cards show scenes of battle, such as the Siege of Ladysmith on the Ace of Clubs, and landscapes of the Trans-vaal region, with a huge gold mine depicted on the Ace of Spades.



The St Louis World's Fair

101 ALUMINIUM MANUFACTURING COMPANY

World's Fair 1904.

Publication
Wisconsin, Aluminium Manufacturing Co., 1904.

Description
53 engraved aluminium playing-cards, including joker, printed in black and red, framed blue portrait to verso, with original aluminium case, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard box, scuffed.

Dimensions
87 by 62mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

The Louisiana Purchase Exposition, or St. Louis World's Fair, of 1904 was attended by almost 20 million people and cost a total of 15 million dollars (today over half a billion!) to host. Commemorating the centennial of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, in which the United States acquired the territory of Louisiana, then a total of 828,000 square miles, from the French First Republic, the fair was among a number of international expositions held around the turn of the twentieth century, including the 1893 Chicago World Fair and the legendary Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900.

In contrast to the French fair, where Art Nouveau dominated, the American fairs were characterised by the Classical style: across 510 hectares in Forest Park, St. Louis, a series of grand, semi-permanent palaces were constructed with pillars, clean lines and open internal spaces to house exhibits from 62 countries. These buildings, along with the landscape architecture that featured formal gardens, a central lagoon and electric illumination, went on to influence urban planning throughout major American cities in the following decades.

Among the many commemorative goods available for purchase at the fair was the present deck of cards, engraved in aluminium and housed in an aluminium case. On each of the 53 cards is depicted one of the exposition's impressive buildings, such as the "Palace of Education" (Ten of Hearts), "St. Louis Union Station" (Jack of Clubs), "Administration Building" (King of Spades) and "General Grant's Log Cabin" (Eight of Diamonds). The Louisiana Purchase Monument, a 65-foot granite obelisk located at centre of the fair's grounds, is featured on the joker. To identify the card values, pip symbols appear in all four corners, values and pips in two opposite corners, and the value is written out both above and below the central illustration. The deck was produced by the Aluminium Manufacturing Company founded by German immigrant Joseph Koenig in 1895 in Manitowoc County, Wisconsin. During the early twentieth century, Manitowoc became a hub of aluminium production, with several large companies producing both essential goods and novelties, including decks of playing-cards.



Suspender cards

102 C.A. Edgarton MFG COMPANY

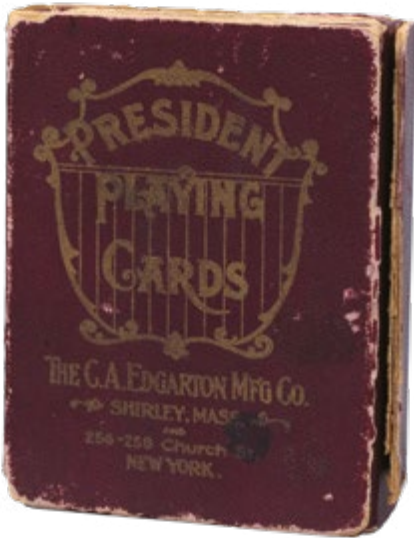
President Suspender.

Publication
[USA, c1905].

Description
52 chromolithographed playing-cards, green and red design to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard slipcase, separation at the join.

Dimensions
89 by 74mm (3.5 by 3 inches).

In 1881, C.A. Edgarton and Sons opened a factory in Massachusetts manufacturing suspenders and garters. Their wares soon became known as president suspenders and thus the firm as the President Suspender Company. Their motto, “comfort, style, service”, appears on this promotional deck of cards published early in the twentieth century, by which time they had opened further premises in New York. In keeping with the presidential theme, the double-ended King and Jack figures bear the portraits of 16 US presidents, two to each card. The queens likewise show eight earlier First Ladies. Each figure is identified by name on the white ruff of their clothing. The backs of the cards bear a design framed by suspenders, with the company motto again featured in the centre.



Jugendstil tarot cards

103 MOSER, Ditha

[Sezessions-Tarock].

Publication

Vienna, Albert Berger and Josef Glanz,
[1906].

Description

54 chromolithographed playing-cards,
brown geometric pattern to versos, housed
in original publisher's printed cardboard
slipcase.

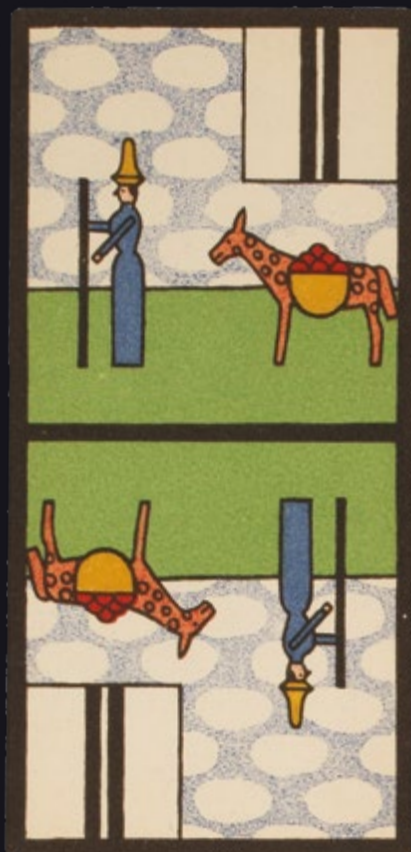
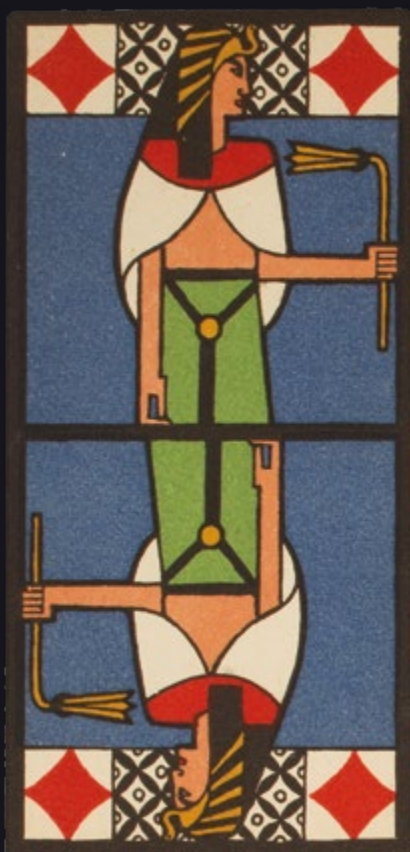
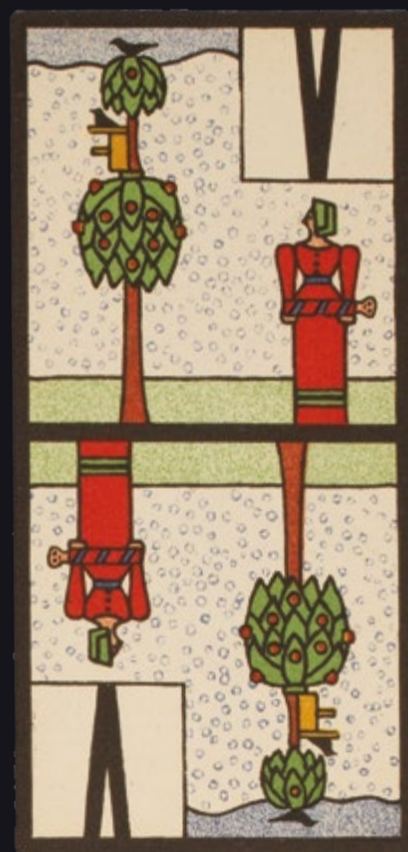
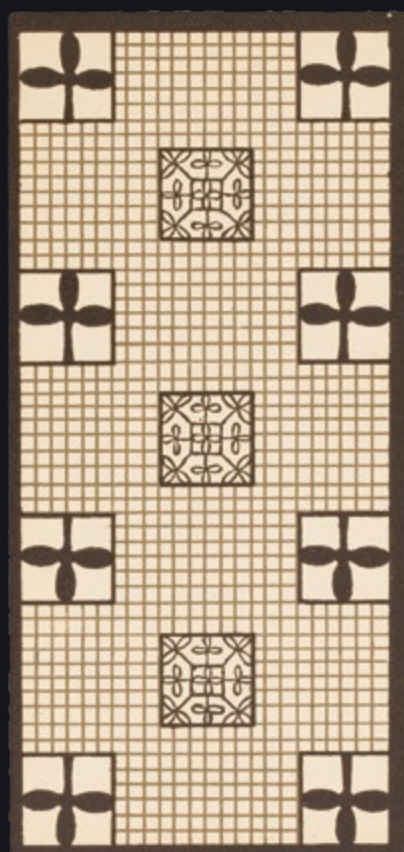
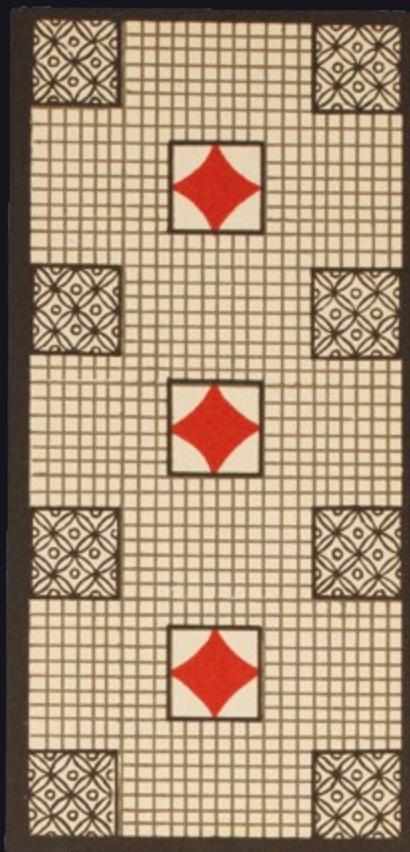
Dimensions

117 by 56mm (4.5 by 2.25 inches).

Wife of Austrian artist Koloman Moser, Ditha Moser was herself an influential member of the Vienna Secession artistic movement that counted Gustav Klimt among its members. Moser focused on producing small objects in the Jugendstil style, such as calendars and playing-cards; she made a tarot deck for a relative's wedding anniversary that incorporated the likenesses of family and friends.

The present deck consists of 32 cards in the French suits and an additional 13 cards based on traditional tarot. Made and sold at Christmas in a small edition of between one hundred and 300 decks, the proceeds from sales (mainly to friends) went to an orphanage in Vienna. The cards show biblical, historical and cultural themes, with toy soldiers, suitable for the season and the beneficiaries, in Moser's typical Jugendstil style, characterised by bright colours, high contrast, reduction of detail and rigid black lines.





Miniature caricature cards

104 [ANONMYOUS]
[Miniature caricature cards].
Publication
[France, early twentieth century].
Description
51 chromolithographed miniature playing-cards, blue design to versos, without Four of Hearts.
Dimensions
59 by 37mm (2.25 by 1.5 inches).

A miniature deck featuring double-ended court cards in a caricature style. The “Valets”, “Dames” and “Rois” have exaggerated smiles and brightly-coloured faces, and they all wear sumptuous clothing (and wigs!) typical of their rank during the Early Modern period. In keeping with the French pattern, all the Queens hold flowers except the Queen of Clubs, who typically holds a fan, although that has not been included here. The maker of the cards is not identified.



Actual size

Tickled pink

105 WÜST, C[onrad] L[udwig]

Patience Karten.

Publication
Frankfurt, C. L. Wüst, [c1910-1916].

Description
52 chromolithographed oval playing-cards, pink floral design to versos, housed in original pink cardboard box.

Dimensions
85 by 55mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Wüst cardmaking firm published this interesting oval deck, sometimes referred to as “Monte Carlo” cards. The value of the number cards is indicated by the number of pip marks in each, as well as two Arabic numerals on cards Two to Nine, and a Roman “X” on the Tens. The court cards feature beautiful double-ended portraits of fierce looking Kings, demure Dames, and hatted and moustached Jacks. The pink floral design to the versos and the pink box in which the cards were housed indicate that this deck was probably designed and marketed for a female audience. On the front of the box appears acronym D.R.G.M. (‘Deutsches Reichsgebrauchsmuster’), which shows that the design had been officially registered within all German states.



Oval patience cards

106 WÜST, C[onrad] L[udwig]
Souvenir de la Suisse Patience.

Publication
Frankfurt, C. L. Wüst, [c1910].

Description
52 chromolithographed oval playing-cards, green floral design to versos, housed in original green cardboard box, blue ribbon, box slightly scuffed.

Dimensions
85 by 54mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

In 1785, Conrad Wüst had published a deck of souvenir playing-cards for travellers to Switzerland, to which Thomas Cook & Co. had recently started offering guided holidays. These cards were republished several decades later in oval format, as here. The country’s iconic and idyllic landscapes are captured on the Ace cards, each of which shows two scenic views, specifically:

- Club – Berne Chapelle de Guillaume Tell
- Diamond – Rigi Staffel Neuchatel
- Heart – Lausanne Club – Interlaken
- Spade – Thoune Vevey

The double-ended court cards show natives from the various regions of Switzerland wearing typical dress. Along the dividing line in the centre, the crest and name of the region appears with the suit mark on the opposite side. Kings are distinguished from Jacks by the crowns surmounting the pips. It is interesting that the deck uses the French pattern rather than the Swiss, which perhaps made the cards more appealing to foreign travellers.



Miniature deck after Wüst

107 [WÜST, Conrad Ludwig, after]
[Miniature scenic cards].

Publication
[Probably Germany, early-twentieth century].

Description
52 miniature engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, versos blank, housed in original publisher’s circular cardboard case.

Dimensions
17 by 12mm (.75 by .5 inches).
cards: 17 x 6mm.
box: diameter 38mm.

Owing to the double-ended style of the court and Ace cards, the latter of which show scenic vignettes, it is likely that this miniature deck was designed after the famous cards of C.L. Wüst. The quality of illustration and print, however, fall below the standards of the Wüst firm.



Actual size

An Indian curio

108 HARVEY, Fred

Indians of the Southwest.

Publication
Kansas City, Fred Harvey Company, 1911.

Description
54 playing-cards, including joker and map-card, separate rule booklet, Native American design to verso, housed in original publisher's red cloth slipcase, scuffed.

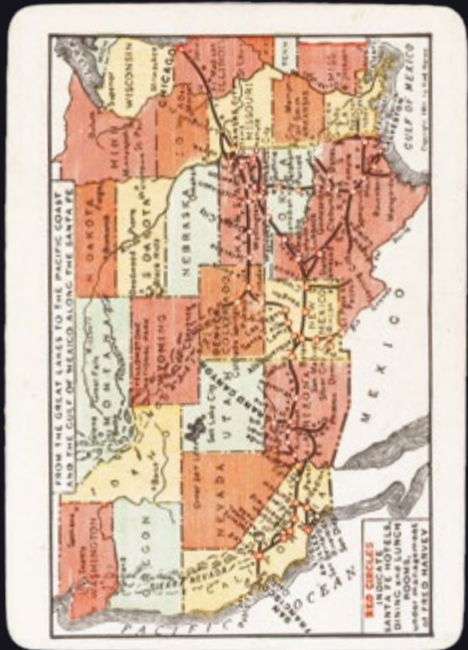
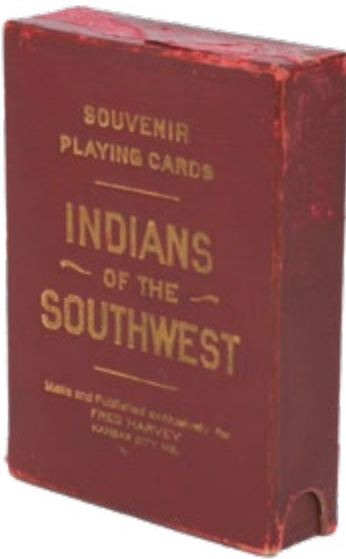
Dimensions
88 by 62mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

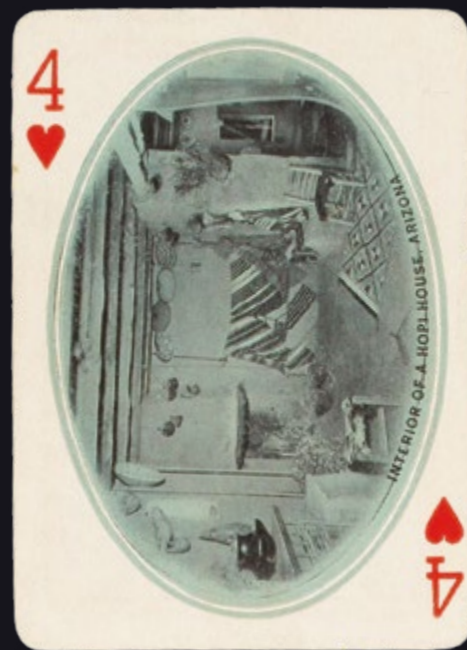
Born in London in 1835, Fred Harvey emigrated to New York at the age of 17 and began working as a pot scrubber at one of the city's popular restaurants, soon working his way up to line-cook. After leaving New York, Harvey began working for the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad, and found himself disgusted at the quality of food available on America's developing train network. As a result he established two restaurants along the Kansas Pacific Railroad, which marked the beginning of his entrepreneurship. During the 1870s, 84 "Harvey Houses" were set up along the railway routes in the West, catering to middle- and upper-class travellers and forming the first restaurant chain in the United States. Naturally much of the appeal of these establishments lay in the reliable quality and consistency of their food and lodgings, but the staff also held a certain appeal: around 5000 unmarried young women between the ages of 18 and 30 moved to the West to work (and live!) in Harvey Houses.

Harvey's businesses also promoted tourism in the American Southwest, which had previously been seen as the uncivilised and potentially dangerous "Wild West". His guided tours of native American territories, called "Indian Detours", took clients from the door of Harvey hotels into the interior of the west, where they could meet with tribe members and, of course, purchase an "Indian curio" as a memento of the experience. Among the commemorative items for sale were decks of playing-cards.

In 1911, the Fred Harvey Company published a deck entitled "Indians of the Southwest", which features photographic images of various scenes from native American life and culture, such as a "Havasupai woman with carrying basket, Arizona" (Seven of Spades), the "interior of a hopi house, Arizona" (Four of Hearts), and "a Havasupai squaw grinding meal near Grand Canyon, Arizona" (Nine of Clubs). One card also shows a map of the United States, on which "red circles indicate Santa Fe hotels, dining and lunch rooms, under management of Fred Harvey".

On the backs of the cards, a design shows a Zuni War God; the accompanying booklet explains that "this curious God is the hero of hundreds of folk-lore tales and the deity of several of the societies of the Zuni. He is represented as possessing a human form furnished with the flint, knife-feathered pinions and tail". On the joker is the "frog symbol of the Pueblo Indians".





Creating the back of the card

109 [ANONYMOUS]
[Black playing-card versos].
Publication
[Twentieth century].
Description
12 woodblock cards, versos blank with red ownership stamp, previously mounted.
Dimensions
57 by 37mm (2.25 by 1.5 inches).

Representing an intermediate stage in the process of manufacturing playing-cards, the 12 cards here are the back sheets that would come to form the versos of the finished cards. They have a range of abstract floral and geometrical designs; the uniqueness of the prints indicates that the cards may be design drafts or proofs, as playing-cards generally have identical versos to ensure the anonymity of the cards.



Actual size

Miniature cards

110 [ANONYMOUS]
[Miniature deck].
Publication
[Early-twentieth century].
Description
52 miniature chromolithographed playing-cards, versos blank, housed in original publisher's cardboard slipcase, Ace of Clubs creased.
Dimensions
46 by 32mm (1.75 by 1.25 inches).

A miniature deck of playing-cards with double-ended portraits on the court cards. The Kings are bearded and crowned, and hold sceptres; the Queens hold flowers or fans; the Jacks all carry an axe. The Ace cards have the suit symbol surrounded by a curlicue framework. The slipcase in which the miniature cards are housed has the King of Spades pasted on the front.



Actual size

Miniature cards

111 [ANONYMOUS]
[Miniature deck].

Publication
[Early-twentieth century].

Description
52 miniature chromolithographed playing-cards, pale blue to versos, housed in original publisher's cardboard slipcase.

Dimensions
34 by 22mm (1.25 by .75 inches).

This deck of miniature playing-cards is so similar to item 110 that it must represent either a later state or edition of cards by the same maker, or the derivative work of another maker. The design is identical, but the cards have clearly been printed from a new plate.



Actual size

Miniature Paris pattern

112 [ANONYMOUS]
[Miniature Paris pattern cards].

Publication
[France, early twentieth century].

Description
32 miniature chromolithographed playing-cards, original publisher's decorative green paper wrapper, with previous label torn off verso.

Dimensions
60 by 38mm (2.25 by 1.5 inches).

A miniature deck of playing-cards in the Paris pattern, with the King (Roi), Queen (Dame) and Jack (Valet) cards showing double-ended portraits of famous historic and mythological figures. The cards are somewhat poorly produced, perhaps owing to their size; the reduction has led to the pip marks being cut off in some place, and the cards have not been cut evenly.



Actual size

Palestine Play-Cards

113 RABAN, Z[e'ev]
Artistic Palestine Play-Cards.

Publication
Jerusalem, Duchifat Press, [c1920].

Description
52 chromolithographed playing-cards with green zodiac design to versos, original publisher's decorative cardboard wrapper.

Dimensions
81 by 57mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

Wolf Rawicki changed his name to Ze'ev Raban after moving from his native Poland to Jerusalem in 1912 to join the Bezalel School of Art, of which he soon became a faculty member. Raban continued to teach at the academy until its closure in 1929, during which time he both researched and created Jewish art. Among the more novel objects produced by Raban was the present deck of playing-cards, in which the suits are represented by Biblically-symbolic items: Stars of David, pomegranates, fig leaves and menorahs. The court cards depict Kings and Queens from scripture on the corresponding cards, and the Jacks are Jonathan, Joab, Haman and, alarmingly, Asmodai, a king of demons in Talmudic literature. Beside each full-length figure, the character is named in English and Hebrew. Raban's deck was later modified and sold for the French market.



Art-Deco Pin-Up Cards

114 [ANONYMOUS]
[Art-deco pin-up cards].

Publication
[Germany or Austria, c1930].

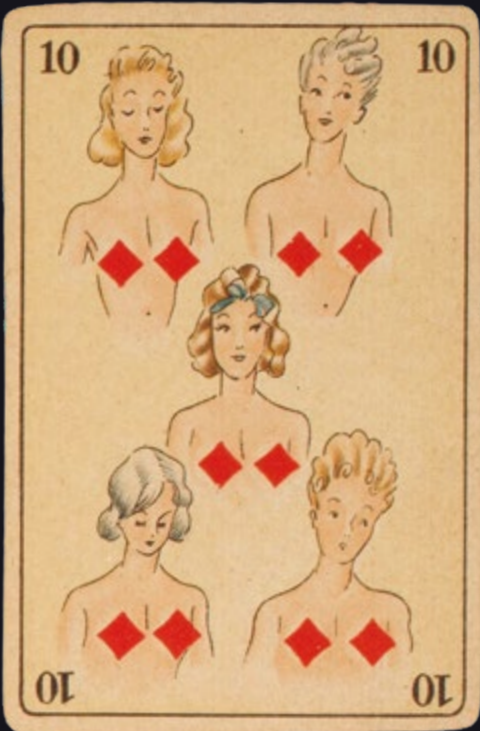
Description
32 chromolithographed playing-cards, blue design to versos.

Dimensions
97 by 64mm (3.75 by 2.5 inches).

References
Verame (2007) p238.

The 32-card deck used to play a number of European card games, including piquet, skat, belote, euchre and préférence, consists of the Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, Jack, Queen, King and Ace of each suit. The present 32-card deck follows this pattern; the Jacks ('Bube') are represented on the cards by a "B", and the Queens ('Dame') represented by a "D".

The rather risque deck presents the feminine form in a range of guises and activities, from driving in a convertible car to dancing naked with friends. The transformation style has also been incorporated, with pip marks on some of the cards forming parting of the illustration. On the Ten of Clubs, the pips form the women's earrings, while on the Ten of Diamonds, they make for convenient coverings for their bare breasts. The Kings depict beautiful women in regal garb; the Queen cards show them applying themselves to womanly pursuits such as putting on makeup or playing the piano; the Jacks are dressed in a slightly more casual way, wearing trousers or shorts. The Ace of Spades, Clubs and Hearts show portraits of glamorous, scantily-clad ladies, while the Ace of Diamonds shows a blonde admiring her behind with a handheld mirror!



Circular union playing-cards

115 INTERNATIONAL PRINTING PRESSMEN AND ASSISTANTS' UNION

[Circular Playing-Cards].

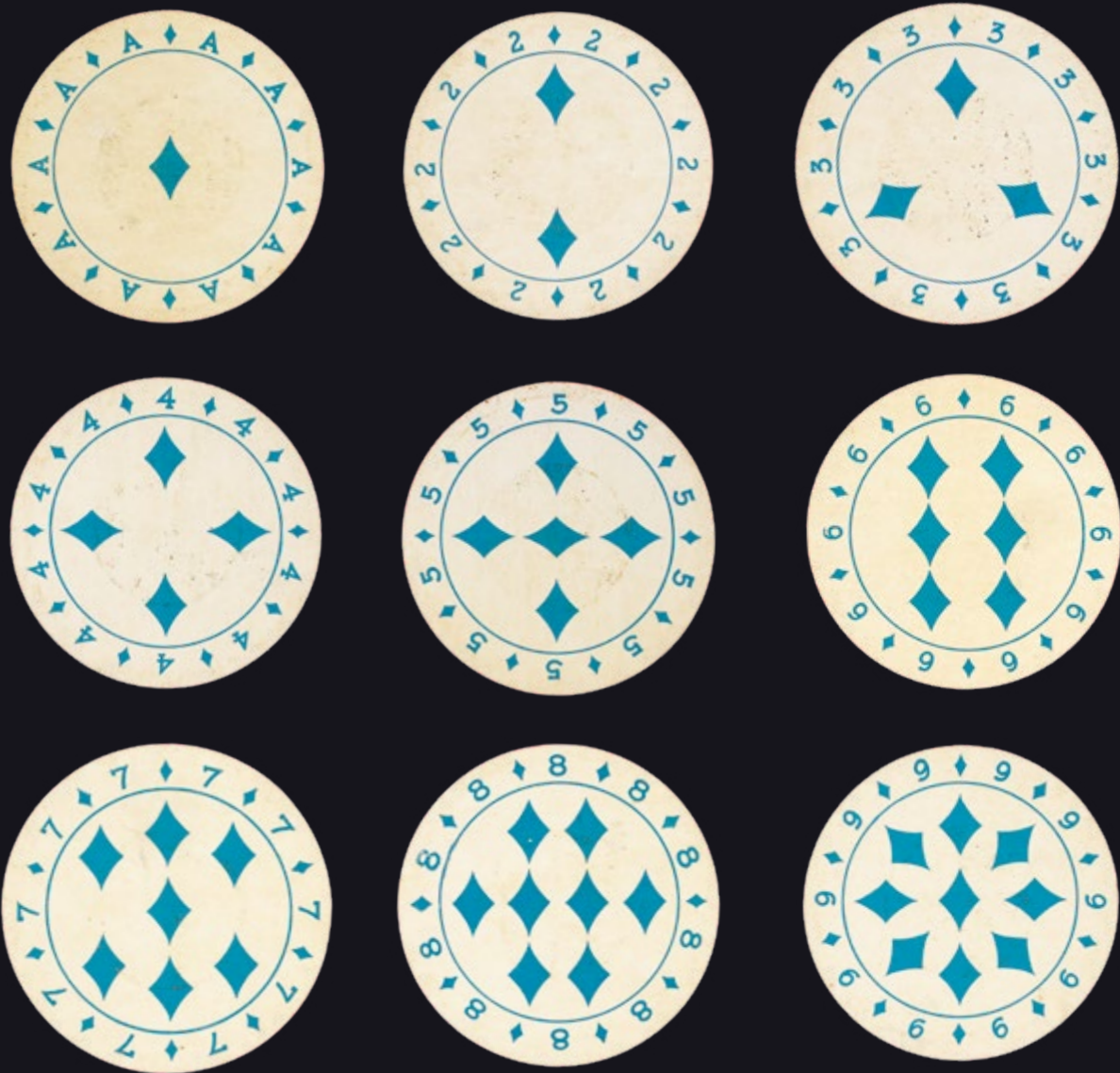
Publication [Tennessee], International Printing Pressmen and Assistants Union, [c1930].

Description 42 chromolithographed circular playing-cards, including joker and blank, rainbow design to versos, housed in original publisher's cardboard case, without lid.

Dimensions Diameter 73mm.

Founded in 1889 to represent the printing workers of the United States and Canada, the IPPU had over 100,000 members at its peak, before in 1973 it merged with another union to become the International Printing and Graphic Communications Union. In the 1930s the union published a novelty deck of circular playing-cards as a Christmas gift.

The four suits are represented in different colours, with Spades black, Hearts red, Diamonds blue and Clubs green. Number cards have their values indicated by the number of pip marks in the centre, as well as by Roman numerals alternating with more pips around the circumference. The court cards have double-ended realistic portraits of the royal characters dressed in sumptuous and richly-coloured clothes. The most unique feature of the deck is undoubtedly the circular shape of the cards.





Nintendo echigo kobana cards

116 NINTENDO

[Echigo kobana cards].

Publication
[Kyoto, Nintendo Playing Card Company, c1930s].

Description
51 playing-cards, including three additional cards, hand-painted on wood.

Dimensions
43 by 30mm (1.75 by 1.25 inches).

In 1889 a new hanafuda manufacturer was established: Nintendo. The Nintendo Card Company produced a huge range of playing-cards - and later of course many other gaming media! - among which was the echigo kobana deck, a variant on hanafuda with a simplified and stylised design that gives the deck a rather mystical appearance. In the present example there are three additional cards: an animalistic joker, a blank or ‘snow suit’ card, and the title card, which shows a Tengu, a supernatural being from Shinto belief.

The deck bears the “Marufuku” trademark symbol on the Tengu card and one playing card, which was in use from Ninetendo’s founding in 1889 up until 1957, when it became a secondary logo. During this period the trademark was found on hanafuda cards but not on their boxes.



“For the Iranian monopoly”

117 ROMANOWSKI DE BONCZA, V.

Iranian Popular Playing Cards.

Publication
London, Thomas de la Rue & Co., [c1937].

Description
42 chromolithographed playing-cards, including joker and title-card, detailed green pattern to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard case, remains of original seal, without lid flap.

Dimensions
90 by 62mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

The last Iranian royal dynasty, the Pahlavi house, ruled Iran between 1925 and 1979. Throughout the 1930s, Reza Shah Pahlavi oversaw a great deal of development, including the completion of the Trans-Iranian Railroad, which won him much support, and also secular reforms to education and in other areas, which caused dissatisfaction among the more conservative members of society. His government issued propaganda in many forms to promote a vision for the new Pahlavi nation, seeking to cultivate a strong sense of Persian identity. Indeed, Reza Shah had adopted the name Pahlavi in reference to the native language spoken in last pre-Islamic Iranian empire.

In 1937, therefore, the Royal Iranian Government Playing Card Monopoly, which was part of the Ministry of Finance, commissioned the present deck of playing-cards, designed by V. Romanowski de Boncza, Director of the Military Museum of Tehran, and printed by Thomas de la Rue & Co. Thomas De La Rue (1793-1866) had transformed the production of playing-cards in Britain during the nineteenth century, and even after his death the firm continued as Thomas de la Rue & Co.. In fact, it today thrives as the world's largest commercial security printer and papermaker.

The number cards have their value indicated by the number of traditional pip marks, which have been slightly modified in design to make them consistent with the curlicues common in Arabic art. The double-ended court cards wear garments and uniforms from various periods in Persian history. The Ace cards each have at their centre a design incorporating some element of Persian iconography or art around the pip mark. The deck was sold with different varieties of verso design; the present example has a green background illustrated with many small artistic elements, such as trees, birds and horsemen.



Fukutoku cards by Nintendo

118 NINTENDO

[Fukutoku cards].

Publication
[Kyoto, Nintendo Playing Card Company, c1940s].

Description
48 playing-cards, hand-painted on wood.

Dimensions
53 by 33mm (2 by 1.25 inches).

The earliest Japanese card game, closely based on those brought to the country by Portuguese traders in the sixteenth century, is karuta, a trick-taking game played with a four-suited deck of 48 cards. The four suits were the Latin Clubs, Coins, Cups and Swords found on the Portuguese decks, which were soon banned under the Tokugawa shogunate. As a result of the prohibition, Japanese cardmakers developed highly abstract designs to differentiate their decks from the banned European cards. These designs are known as merukifuda, and while they maintain the four suits, the striking red and black stylised design makes it difficult to distinguish the original symbols.

In the Hokuriku region of Japan, a variant of the mekurifuda arose known as Fukutoku; distinguishing features include round cups, two gold coins on the 2 of Coins, and “squiggles” on the 1, 10, 11 and 12 of Swords and 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 12 of Clubs. The present example of a Fukutoku deck was published by Nintendo, whose trademark is found on the 4 of Coins.



Miniature key-chain deck

119 [ANONYMOUS]
[Miniature deck on key-chain].
Publication
[early-to mid-twentieth century].
Description
54 miniature chromolithographed playing-cards, including two jokers, red zigzag design to versos, housed in metal case on key-chain.
Dimensions
30 by 21mm (1.25 by .75 inches).

A miniature deck of cards housed in a small metal case on a key-chain. The cards display the standard English pattern with double-edged court cards. The pip mark on the Ace of Spades is considerably larger than on the other Aces, while on the Ace of Hearts the word “Lord” appears. This is likely to correspond to the maker, although there is no evidence of a cardmaker or company publishing cards under this name.



Actual size

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland cards

120 [ANONYMOUS]
[Alice in Wonderland cards].
Publication
[mid-twentieth century].
Description
52 manuscript playing-cards with original watercolour, versos blank.
Dimensions
114 by 77mm (4.5 by 3 inches).
References
Verame (2007) p63.

Lewis Carroll’s beloved tale of ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland’ inspired a wealth of contemporary and later artists to incorporate its characters into their work. This deck of playing-cards presents some of the story’s most well-known characters, including the Mad Hatter, the March Hare and the Queen of Hearts, - although here she also appears in Spades, Diamonds and Clubs variety too! The value of the number cards is indicated by the number of pip symbols worn by or surrounding their character, while the court cards are represented by the King, Queen and Page from the plot, and the Ace by the executioner. Interestingly, Alice herself does not appear on the cards.





“We have a new JACK of Hearts”

121 [HARTLEY, Henry Allan]

Kennedy Kards.

Publication
[USA], Humor House, 1963.

Description
54 colour-printed playing-cards, including joker and title-card, caricature portraits to versos, housed in original publisher’s printed cardboard case, remains of original seal.

Dimensions
90 by 60mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

“The royalty of playing-cards has variously represented Adam, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, Helen of Troy, Pallas Athena and others. Our own national leaders and heroes have been occasionally commemorated on face cards. The ‘Kennedy Kards’ have been conceived within this tradition, and confirm what voters have said in recent elections - we have a new JACK of Hearts. The White House is now a full house. Long live the King, the Queen and the Jack!”

So states the title-card of the deck published in 1963 by Humor House, depicting the Kennedy clan. John F. Kennedy himself is depicted as a double-figure King of Hearts and Diamonds, as well as the Ace of Spades, while the other court cards variously show Robert, Edward, Joseph, Jackie, Ethel, Joan and Rose Kennedy, as well as Peter Lawford, actor and husband of Patricia Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson, JFK’s vice president. Some figures hold objects including a football, a film-reel, the White House, and a milk bottle, perhaps in reference to the Kennedys’ famous prolificacy. The backs of the cards feature the same ten caricatures as appear on the court cards, while the one joker presents the Democratic donkey.

The deck was scheduled for sale in 1963, but the assassination of President Kennedy put a stop to its publication; despite never being released to the public, the cards began slowly to surface during the following decade. Although his name is not mentioned anywhere in the deck, the patent for the Kennedy Kards was filed by Henry Allan Hartley, an award-winning comic book artist who worked for Marvel in the 1960s. Humor House does not seem to have published any other cards, and may have been incorporated for this deck alone.



Metro ticket playing-cards

122 [POLIAKOFF, Alexis]

[Metro ticket Playing-Cards].

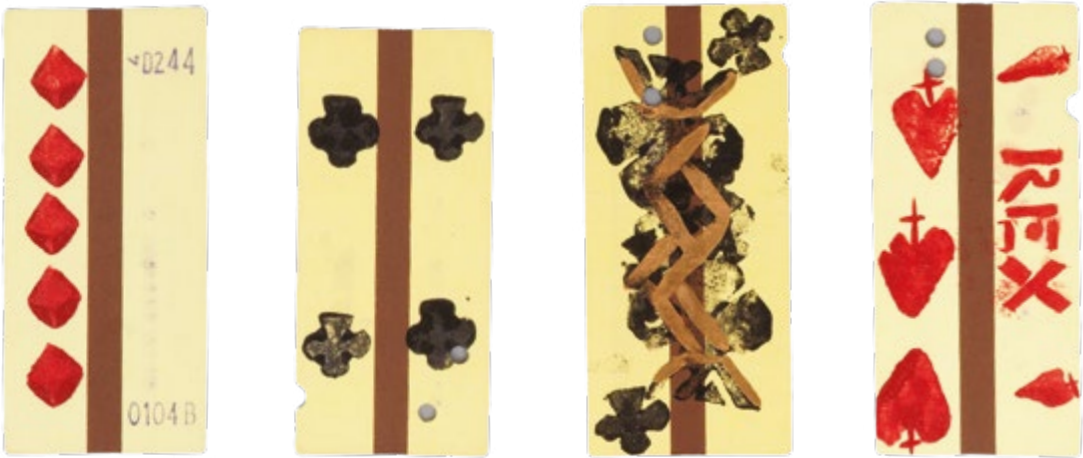
Publication
[Paris], RATP, [1970s].

Description
52 metro tickets with black and red paint
to verso.

Dimensions
66 by 30mm (2.5 by 1.25 inches).

The Régie autonome des transports parisiens (RATP) was founded in 1949 to operate Paris’s various forms of public transport, including the Métro, tram and bus networks. The design of its metro tickets remained fairly consistent throughout the early decades of RATP’s administration, with rectangular paper tickets printed with details of the fare or route, and punched to indicate use. Several distinguishing features during the latter-half of the twentieth century, however, mean that the present tickets can be dated to the 1970s. For example, they have the brown magnetic stripe introduced in 1968 which allowed tickets to be read by an automated machine, but are not printed on the thicker, more brightly yellow card brought in the 1980s.

Tickets were collected and transformed into an original deck of playing-cards by Alexis Poliakoff, son of Russian-French artist Serge Poliakoff. Each has been painted in red and black ink, using small stamps cut from potato to produce the pip symbols, while court cards are identified in a variety of ways, including “REX” (King) written on the King of Hearts and stylised abstract illustrations of crowned figures on others.



Norman Rockwell's Spring

123 ROCKWELL, Norman

Spring.

Publication
Minnesota, Gold Circle Line, [c1970].

Description
54 chromolithographed playing-cards,
including two jokers, pictorial versos.

Dimensions
89 by 57mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

In the 1970s, playing-card manufacturer Gold Circle Line, who produced decks for a game called Trump, issued four decks of cards featuring Norman Rockwell's illustrations of the four seasons. The present deck shows spring, as represented by Rockwell's 1949 painting 'Beguiling Buttercup', which shows a boy in a straw hat holding a buttercup under a girl's chin. They stand in a field against an idyllic blue sky, with a dog waiting at their feet. This image illustrates the back of the cards in this deck, which otherwise follows a standard pattern.



The 1972 election

124 [GREEN, Peter]

Politicards [1972].

Publication
Los Angeles, Politicards, 1971.

Description
53 colour-printed playing-cards, including one joker, American flag suit design to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard matchbox case.

Dimensions
89 by 58mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

The 1972 American election is famous for the landslide victory incumbent Richard Nixon won over the Democratic challenger, George McGovern, carrying 49 of the 50 states. Many of the key players in the election, from both politics and wider American culture, are depicted on the present deck of cards designed by young illustrator Peter Green in 1971, for release during the election year. It forms the first deck of Politicards, which would go on to be produced for many subsequent elections across the next four decades. Green evidently anticipated Nixon's victory, as on the box the president is depicted as a king upon his throne, wearing football boots and bearing a sceptre topped with a ball, a reference to his days as a junior varsity player.

Within the deck, the red suits represent the Democratic Party, with both Ace cards showing an anthropomorphised donkey, while the black suits, with elephants on their Aces, show the Republican players. The same image of the bethroned Nixon appears as the King of Spades, and he is again featured as the King of Clubs sporting a laurel wreath and draped in the Confederate flag. Interestingly, it is not his opponent, McGovern, who appears as the King of the red suits, but rather Edmund Muskie as the King of Hearts, and Lyndon B. Johnson as the King of Diamonds. Muskie had campaigned against Nixon in the 1968 election as Hubert Humphrey's vice president candidate, and he was a front-runner for the Democratic nomination in 1972, before a number of attacks on his person and politics severely discredited his campaign. Johnson reluctantly endorsed McGovern in 1972, but in fact believed that Muskie would prove a tougher rival for Nixon.

McGovern features as the Seven of Hearts, where he is sweating on a treadmill wearing a jumper than has "68" crossed out in favour of "72", a reference to his brief and unsuccessful run for nomination during the previous election in the wake of president Kennedy's assassination. Other figures that appear include numerous politicians, Nixon's family, and Jane Fonda, whose political activity involved outspoken opposition to the war in Vietnam. The deck's two joker cards show Norman Mailer, writer and filmmaker, who also opposed the war and had unsuccessfully run for mayor of New York in 1969; and William F. Buckley, who also campaigned, without success, for the same position in 1965. Subsequent decks of "politicards", some of which were also by Green, were later updated with the politicians of the day.



The Visconti tarot

125 [after BEMBO, Bonifacio]

I Tarocchi dei Visconti.

Publication
Bergamo, Accademia Carrara, 1980.

Description
78 colour-printed facsimile tarot cards, burgundy to versos, with instruction booklet, housed in original publisher's wooden box.

Dimensions
Cards: 173 x 89mm.
Box: 57 x 197 x 113mm (h x w x d).

From the fifteenth century onwards the card game of tarocchi spread from Italy to the rest of Europe, with many regional variations appearing in Germany, Austria and France. It was not until the late-eighteenth century that tarot cards became associated with the occult, when French spiritualists embellished the history of the deck to give the cards a mystical background and justify their new use in divination. From that point onwards, two distinct strands developed in the tarot tradition: one producing decks for card games, the other for cartomancy.

Long before tarot cards gained any magical associations, in the mid-fifteenth century, the Duke of Milan, Filippo Maria Visconti, commissioned a tarot deck which was then made by Brescian artist Bonifacio Bembo. His son-in-law Francesco Sforza later commissioned further cards, and the extant 15 decks associated with the Visconti and Sforza families are therefore known as the Visconti-Sforza Tarot. Today only incomplete examples of the decks exist, with their cards held in different academic and private collections across the world.

74 of the 78 Visconti-Sforza tarot cards are held between the Morgan Library & Museum in New York, the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo and the private Colleoni collection, also in Bergamo. From these cards, the Accademia Carrara released a reproduction of the 78-card tarot deck in 1980. The two missing trump cards - the Devil and Tower - were redesigned based on those in similar decks. Motifs such as the sun, dove, crown and crossed rings, which were associated with both Viscontis and Sforzas, appear across the cards, and some of the figures are said to bear the likeness of certain family members.





Ubo playing-cards

126 [ANONYMOUS UBO CRAFTSMAN]

[Ubo Playing-Cards].

Publication
[Mindanao, 1980].

Description
24 carved tree-bark cards; housed between two decorative tree-bark planks held together with string, one chipped.

Dimensions
69 by 34mm (2.75 by 1.25 inches).

In the Philippines, an isolated indigenous tribe called the Ubo, from the Bagobo subgroup of the Manobo peoples, is known for its craftsmanship. As well as fine weaponry and jewellery, they make playing-cards from tree bark. ‘Kenklem’, or bark, is stripped from the tree and cut into uniform rectangles; a black stain developed from banana stalk is then applied, and when dry, the card is engraved with a knife. Each card has a value of one to eight, represented by the design, which varies from deck to deck. In the Ubo game of ‘siyum-siyum’, the players each place their bets (these can include property and wives!), receive three cards, and whichever player’s cards add up to 9, 19, 29, or the closest number, wins the game. Decks of cards are typically stored between two wooden end-pieces and tied with string.



Disney playing-cards

127 DISNEY

Director Mickey.

Publication
[USA, the Walt Disney Company, c1980].

Description
54 chromolithographed playing-cards, including two jokers, Mickey Mouse design to versos.

Dimensions
90 by 58mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

A deck of children’s playing-cards featuring Mickey Mouse and friends as the court cards. Produced by the Walt Disney Company in the early 1980s, each card has an illustration of Mickey sitting on a director’s chair on the back. He also features on the double-ended King cards, with Minnie as his Queen. Donald Duck serves as the Jacks, with which a good effort has been made to replicate the standard English pattern, as the Jacks of Spades and Hearts are drawn in profile. The Ace and number cards all have their value represented by the number of pip marks, and the joker cards show Goofy in a jester’s hat and ruff.

The cards are one of hundreds of thousands of products themed around Mickey Mouse & Friends, the world’s second highest grossing media franchise, topped only by Pokémon. Indeed, Mickey playing-cards have proved such an enduringly popular product that in 2023 Disney collaborated with Bicycle Cards to release a special 100th anniversary deck.



The 1980 election

128 NICHOLS, Keith

Politicards [1980].

Publication
[Washington DC, Kamber Group], 1980.

Description
55 colour-printed playing-cards, including two jokers and scorecard, lone star design to verso, housed in original box.

Dimensions
89 by 57mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).



In 1979, Democratic labour union activist Victor Kamber bought the Politicards name, and published decks to commemorate the following two general elections, in 1980 and 1984. For the first time since 1932 an incumbent president was defeated (since 1888 for a Democratic president!), when former Governor of California, Ronald Reagan, defeated Jimmy Carter by 489 electoral votes to 49. The high inflation, energy crises and trouble in the Middle East of the 1970s had led to widespread dissatisfaction with the Carter administration, and Reagan's campaign for increased defence spending, side-supply economics and a balanced budget, easily won over the American people.

As typical for Politicards, the red suits represent the Democratic players, with both Ace cards showing an anthropomorphised donkey, while the black suits, with elephants on their Aces, show the Republicans. Reagan therefore appears as the King of Spades, brandishing a pistol, while on the King of Clubs, Gerald Ford is playing golf. Having succeeded to the presidency upon Nixon's resignation in 1974, Ford served just two years when he was defeated in 1976 by Carter. Carter himself naturally features as the King of Diamonds, while as Queen his wife Rosalyn controls him as a marionette; the King of Hearts shows Edward Kennedy, who was expected to present a strong challenge for the Democratic nomination, but ultimately lost 24 of the 34 primaries and was forced to concede. It is the cartoon of Kennedy that also appears on the box in which the deck is housed.

In addition to other politicians, figures such as Muhammed Ali, who was recruited that year by President Carter for a diplomatic mission to Africa, feminist Bella Azbug, who had been controversially dismissed as the chairwoman of the National Advisory Committee for Women the previous year, and Bob Hope, whose comedy special 'Bob Hope for President' was set in the context of that year's election, appear on the playing-cards. In 1996, the Politicards name expired and was reclaimed the original artist, Peter Green, who continued to produce new decks for each election year for the subsequent two decades.



Rothschild playing-cards

129 VERAME, Jean

Alix de Rothschild a désiré et moulu ce jeu de 54 cartes et en a désigné les personnages.

Publication
France, J.M. Simon, 1982.

Description
Two decks, each with 56 chromolithographed playing-cards, including two jokers, one title-card, additional card, and instruction booklet, logo on blue background to versos, both housed in original publisher's navy faux leather soft case, black ribbons, one deck unopened.

Dimensions
88 by 57mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).
Case: 39 x 142 x 112mm (h x w x d).

In 1982, Jean Verame designed a deck of playing-cards for his mother-in-law, Alix Hermine Jeannette de Rothschild, showing members of the prestigious family and their various residences. Photographic portraits of relatives appear in oval frames on the court cards and jokers, while on the Aces hexagonal frames contain images of four different Rothschild mansions. Alix and her daughter Lili, Verame's late wife, appear on the Queen of Diamonds. Two decks are here presented in a royal blue box emblazoned with a design incorporating Alix's initials.



The 1984 Election

130 GATES, Donald

Politicards [1984].

Publication
[Washington DC, Kamber Group, 1984].

Description
55 colour-printed playing-cards, including two jokers and scorecard, striped design to verso, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard case.

Dimensions
89 by 56mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

The 50th United States presidential election took place in November 1984, with incumbent Republican president Ronald Reagan winning a landslide victory over Democratic candidate Water Mondale. As late as 1983, Reagan's approval rating was as low as 35% and polls predicted his defeat to the Democratic nominee. Within a year, however, several factors had contributed to his resurgence: the reduction in unemployment rates from 10.6% to 7.7%; his strong stance in the wake of the Beirut barrack bombings; the successful American invasion of Grenada. Mondale later said that the final blow to his campaign was when Reagan, who at 73 was the oldest president then to have served, joked that, "I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience".

As during the previous election in 1980, Victor Kamber published a deck of *Politicards* featuring caricatures of the key political players. The style of this deck is somewhat different from that of earlier decks; the new artist recruited for the task, Donald Gates, favoured more realistic and detailed portraits, while maintaining the absurdity that characterises *Politicards*. Mondale, for example, is shown as the King of Hearts yanking on the tail of the Democratic donkey, while ex-actor Reagan is shown wrapped up in film tape, on the King of Spades. On the King of Clubs, George Bush appears as a wind-up toy. In contrast, Mondale's running partner, Geraldine Ferraro, is shown as the Queen of Diamonds, dressed in a tiger-print cat suit and holding a leopard on a leash, reflecting her reputation as a tough and ground-breaking lawmaker. The majority of the cards depict politicians, but there also appear the wives of the candidates, Joan Mondale and Nancy Reagan, various public figures such as Wayne Newton and Bella Abzug, the CIA-director William Casey, and, as the two jokers, news commentators Dan Rather and Roger Mudd.

This second deck published by the Kamber Group was the last set of *Politicards* to be published until the original artist Peter Green reclaimed the brand in 1996.



Transparent playing-cards

131 BROSSART, Raphaël
L'Extraludice Jeu de Voyance.

Publication
Paris, [late-twentieth century].

Description
32 playing-cards colour-printed onto transparent plastic, with additional king of diamonds.

Dimensions
83 by 54mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

An interesting deck of cards printed on transparent plastic, by author and artist Raphaël Brossart in Paris in the late-twentieth century. Being transparent, they are clearly intended more as an artistic piece than for playing table games! The deck is in the Paris pattern that shows double-ended court cards depicting historical or mythological figures. Ace cards have a pip mark at the centre, with the Roman numeral “1” in each of the four corners. Brossart’s name and address are found on the Ace of Clubs.



Jazz cards

132 PENNANGUER, Yannick

Jazz.

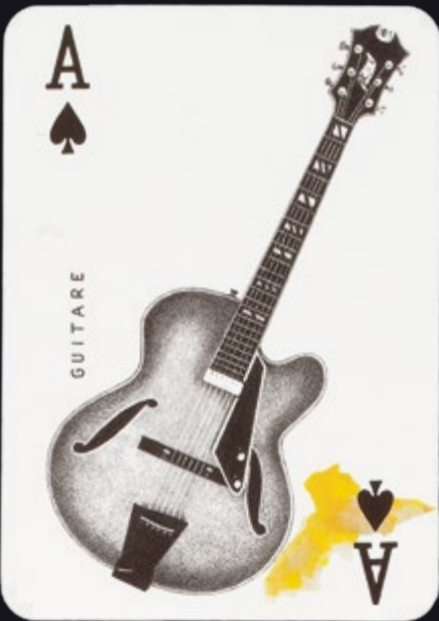
Publication
France, B.P. Grimaud, 1989.

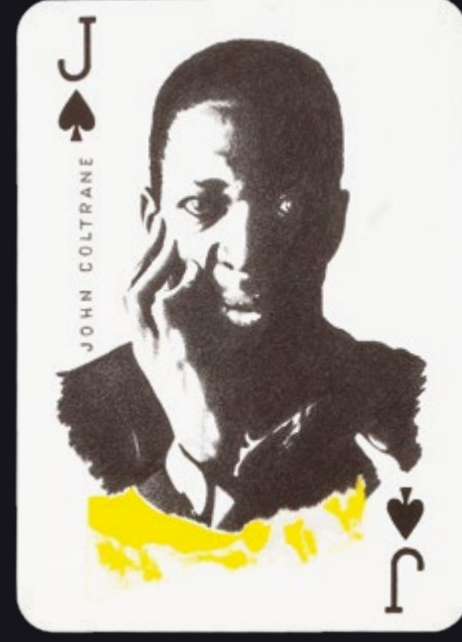
Description
55 chromolithographed playing-cards, including two jokers, title-card, and instruction booklet, black and white “jazz” design to verso, housed in original publisher’s printed cardboard case.

Dimensions
88 by 62mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

French artist Yannick Pennanguer has designed a number of decks of cards on themes ranging from the French Revolution to sailing ships. In 1989, he designed the present deck, celebrating the great jazz musicians of the twentieth century. The joker card depicts a steamboat, and the backs of the cards read “jazz”. Each suit is associated with a different colour, and while the court cards show the portraits of musicians, the Aces each have an instrument:

Spades (yellow) - Duke Ellington, Marie-Lou Williams, John Coltrane, guitar
Hearts (blue) - Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Thelonious Monk, saxophone
Diamonds (red) - Art Tatum, Dinah Washington, Charlie Mingus, trumpet
Clubs (green) - Charlie Parker, Ella Fitzgerald, Art Pepper, piano





Coca-Cola cards

133 U.S. PLAYING CARD COMPANY

Coca-Cola playing-cards.

Publication
Cincinnati, U.S. Playing Card Company, 1989.

Description
55 chromolithographed playing-cards, including two jokers, one instruction card, and one title-card, Coca-cola logo to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard case.

Dimensions
89 by 57mm (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

Playing-cards have been in the Coca-Cola Company's advertising arsenal since the first deck in 1931, featuring the famous logo, then in black. Since that deck, the company's promotional cards have become collectors items as the drink's iconic status in popular culture has only continued to grow. The present deck, published for Coca-Cola by the prolific U.S. Playing Card Company in 1989, has standard cards in the English pattern, with the company's logo on the back of each. The two jokers depict a clown in an oversized costume, and also included in the deck was a card advertising a number of resources published by the U.S. Playing Card Company to "improve your game play".



A fairytale transformation

134 GERICH, Karl

Transformation Playing Cards.

Publication
Bath, Karl Gerich, 1994.

Description
54 engraved playing-cards with original hand-colour, including two additional cards, one with manuscript note, coloured curlicue pattern to versos, housed in leather box.

Dimensions
93 by 67mm (3.75 by 2.75 inches).

Twice signed and dated by the author.

Karl Gerich was one of very few late-twentieth century cardmakers to use traditional techniques to produce decks of cards from engraved copperplates. To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the founding of the English Playing Card Society, Gerich designed and published a transformation deck themed around traditional English nursery rhymes. The suit symbols are incorporated into scenes from the tales of Humpty Dumpty (Nine of Diamonds), Mary and her little lamb (Five of Clubs), and the Owl and the Pussy Cat (Four of Hearts). The illustrations integrate the pip marks so seamlessly that it is sometimes difficult to decipher the value of the cards!

On the court cards, the Kings depict caricatures of King Canute, Old King Cole, King Arthur and Bluff King Hal; the Jacks are similarly apt characters, namely little jack Horner, Jack Sprat, Jack and the Beanstalk, and the nimble and quick Jack that jumped over the candlestick; on the Queen cards, Alice, Cinderella and Little Red Riding Hood are joined by Margaret Thatcher as the Queen of Diamonds!

The deck was published in an edition of just 72, of which the present example is number 68. Since Gerich printed and painted each deck by hand, the colouring varies between decks.



A deck of dolls

135 GRIMAUD

Barbie Jeu de 54 cartes.

Publication
[Paris], Grimaud, [1996].

Description
55 colour-printed playing-cards, including two jokers and title-card, Barbie design to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard case.

Dimensions
88 by 63mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

In 1848, Baptiste-Paul Grimaud founded 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. It continues today as part of the Cartamundi Group, where it produces luxury playing and tarot cards, as well as accessories.

Over the years, Grimaud's output has varied greatly, from traditional decks to novelty special editions. Among the latter is the Barbie card game released in 1996. First launched in 1959, Barbie's popularity rapidly soared, with sales exceeding Mattel's production capacities for the first three years after the doll's debut. From 1984, the brand expanded into a multimedia franchise which includes games, films and series, and licensing of its logo and images also led to widespread dissemination of the Barbie brand.

The Grimaud "54-card game" is a French-style deck, but purple and pink rather than black and red. The Aces show a portrait of Barbie in different styles; the King cards have full-length photographic images of Ken dolls in formal-wear; the Queens are depicted as Barbies wearing elaborate gowns; the Jacks are dressed in casual day-wear. The number cards show the corresponding number of pips, illustrated in a hand-drawn style, and have their values written in all four corners. The two jokers, one pink, one purple, show baby Barbie. The backs of the cards are decorated with a whimsical and colourful pattern featuring butterflies, flowers, birds and other elements.



Most-wanted

136 [U.S. DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY]

Iraqi most-wanted playing-cards.

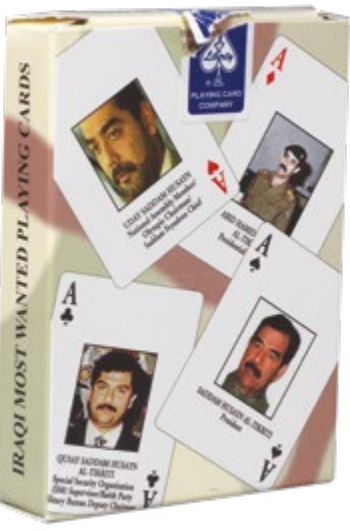
Publication
Arlington, Texas, Liberty Playing Card Company, [2003].

Description
54 photographic printed playing-cards, including two jokers and additional card, camouflage pattern to verso, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard case.

Dimensions
89 by 64mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

In 2003, the American Defense Intelligence Agency published a deck of playing-cards for soldiers in Iraq featuring the photos and identities of members of President Saddam Hussein's government and others on the most-wanted list. The more important the US considered an individual's capture or assassination, the higher-rank of card they appeared on, with Saddam Hussein himself featuring on the Ace of Spades, his two sons on the Aces of Hearts and Clubs, and his secretary on the Ace of Diamonds. Photographs were taken from open sources as well as military intelligence files, but 13 cards have black outlines where images of the targets were unavailable. The two joker cards give information about Iraqi naming customs and military ranks, and mistakenly bear the Hoyle joker trademark owned by the United States Playing Card Company. Fittingly, the backs of the cards have a camouflage pattern.

As soon as the cards were announced at a military press conference in Qatar, individuals and companies leapt into action to try to make a profit for themselves from the idea. Websites such as eBay and Amazon were flooded by listings from sellers offering their own editions of the cards. Although The United States Playing Card Company was officially contracted to produce the decks issued to soldiers, the American Embassy in Kuwait ordered their own sets from the Liberty Playing Card Company in Texas. The company thenceforth claimed to be 'the authorised government contractor' and thus became the dominant supplier of the Most-Wanted cards to the domestic US market; the present deck is an example of their product. Despite the surrounding chaos and controversy, the Most-Wanted cards may have succeeded in helping US troops identify and capture targets, as by 2024, 48 of the 52 members depicted on the cards had been captured or died.



Most-wanted

137 [U.S. DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY]

[Iraqi most-wanted playing-cards].

Publication
[USA, 2003].

Description
52 chromolithographed playing-cards, with two jokers and additional card, camouflage pattern to versos.

Dimensions
78 by 57mm (3 by 2.25 inches).

A further edition of the Most-Wanted playing-cards issued to U.S. troops deployed in Iraq in 2003. For a description of the cards, see item 136. The present example, not having the Hoyle joker trademark on the joker cards, is an unofficial edition probably printed for the domestic market.



The smallest of them all

138 VIDAL, Marc

Le Plus Petit Jeu de cartes du Monde.

Publication
[France, twenty-first century].

Description
32 digitally printed miniature playing-cards, red pattern to verso, original paper packaging.

Dimensions
12 by 8mm (.5 by .25 inches).

A miniature deck of playing-cards that have the French court cards of Valet, Dame and Roi. The cards may appear pointillist in style, as the design seems to be formed out of small coloured dots, but in reality this is the result of the reduction in size to fit the tiny scale of the cards. The pixels printed by a digital printer are so large compared to the size of the card, that it produces this result.



Hillary for President!

139
[PARODY PRODUCTIONS]

Hillary Presidential Playing Cards.

Publication
[Cincinnati, Parody Productions, 2007].

Description
55 colour-printed playing-cards, including two jokers and title-card, portrait of Clinton to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard case.

Dimensions
89 by 65mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

Involved in politics from childhood, Hillary Clinton became the first female senator from New York in 2001 while still holding the title of First Lady, admittedly only for 17 days until the inauguration of George W. Bush. In 2006, Clinton was re-elected for a second Senate term, which she served until 2009, and during which she also sought nomination as the Democratic Party's presidential candidate for the 2008 general election.

In January 2007 Clinton officially launched her campaign, for which she had been preparing for five years. Her main competitors in the race for nomination were Barack Obama and John Edwards, against both of whom she fared poorly in debates, Obama's push for "change" winning the hearts and minds of party members over Clinton's insistence on experience. After a year and a half of campaigning, Clinton eventually stepped down from the race and endorsed Obama, whose own successful presidential campaign she continued to support throughout the following months.

The present deck of cards was published in 2007 when the outcome of the race for Democratic nomination was still uncertain. Key players in the political game are caricatured as cartoon bodies with enlarged photographic heads. In addition to the Aces, which show a portrait captioned "Hillary for President 2008", Clinton herself appears on the king cards, vowing to "Bring honesty and integrity back to the White House" on the King of Diamonds, to "Strengthen our military and implement responsible foreign policy" on the Clubs, and to "Provide Universal Healthcare for all Citizens" on the Hearts, while promising the traditional "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" on the Spades. Her husband, former-President Bill Clinton, is featured on the Jack of Spades as a boxer, "The Comeback Kid", who is getting ready to punch a Republican "GOP" bag; their daughter Chelsea is depicted on the Queen card, holding a sign saying "Go Mom" and accompanied by a banner reading "It takes a village".

Various other prominent figures from politics, media and American culture are featured, all showing their support for the campaign with a range of humorous banners, including Barbara Streisand, who appears in front of the iconic Hollywood sign that has here been extended to read "Hollywood votes Hillary". Even John McCain, the Republican rival in the presidential race, features, depicted on the Eight of Clubs holding two signs that say "Vote Hillary" and "No torture compromise", regarding his unyielding stance on prohibiting torture. Obama too appears in the deck, dressed as a schoolboy in reference to his relatively young age at the time of the race, with "When I grow up I want to be president" written on a blackboard behind him. Evan Bayh, Senator for Indiana, wears a "VP" badge; having endorsed Clinton from early on in the race, Bayh later stated he would accept the role as Obama's running mate if offered, which he was not. The two joker cards show George W. Bush and Dick Cheney wearing jesters hats!

Parody Productions of Cincinnati, founded in 2003, publish of similar novelty decks with sporting and political themes, as well as jigsaw puzzles.



McCain for President!

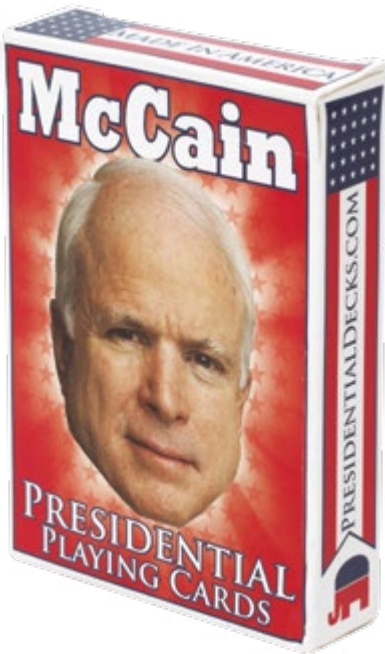
140 [PARODY PRODUCTIONS]

McCain Presidential Playing Card Deck.

Publication
[Cincinnati, Parody Productions, 2007].

Description
55 colour-printed playing-cards, including two jokers and title-card, portrait of McCain to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard case.

Dimensions
90 by 65mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).



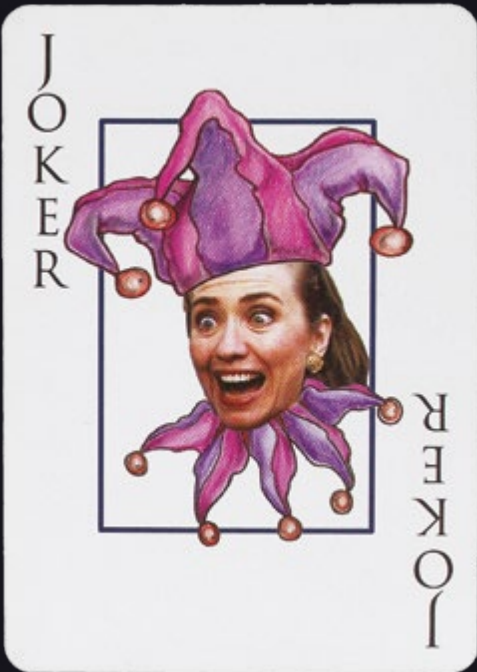
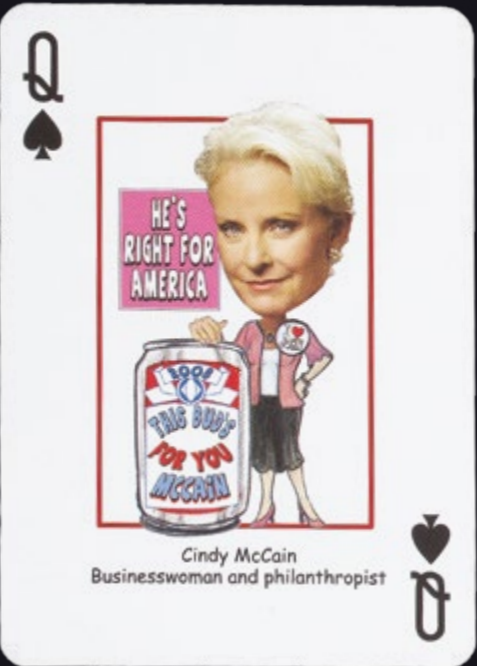
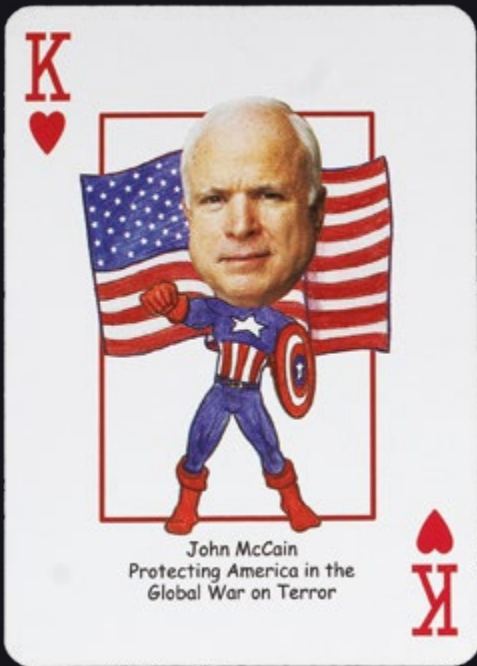
Senator of Arizona from 1987 until his death in 2018, John McCain was the Republican nominee for the presidency in 2008. Despite widespread popularity among Republicans, the ex-Navy officer ran into problems early on in the race for the nomination, as both donations and support withdrew following his backing of the 2007 Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act, which paved the way to citizenship for 12 million undocumented migrants. With funds low, McCain took advantage of free media, including debates and sponsored events, and eventually won the nomination after his competitors, Rudi Giuliani and Mitt Romney, dropped out.

From the outset of the general election campaign, McCain tailed behind the Democratic nominee, Barack Obama, who, McCain claimed, lacked his decades of experience in politics and leadership. With his unexpected running mate, Sarah Palin, McCain temporarily drew ahead in polls in September 2008, but was soon back behind Obama, whom he famously acknowledged to be “a decent family man, citizen, that I just happen to have disagreements with on fundamental issues”. Finally, on November 4, the Democrats won the election with 365 electoral votes to 173. Previously known for his more moderate stance, McCain then adopted an orthodox conservative position in the aftermath of his defeat, generally opposing the actions of the Obama administration.

The present deck of cards was published in 2007 when McCain’s nomination as Republican candidate seemed far from secure. Key players in the political game are caricatured as cartoon bodies with enlarged photographic heads. In addition to the Aces, which show a portrait captioned “McCain for President 2008”, McCain himself naturally appears on the King cards, “protecting America in the Global War of Terror” on the King of Hearts, promising “Smaller Government and Economic Prosperity” on the Clubs, promoting “Dignity of Life and Traditional Values” on the Diamonds and representing “American Strength at Home and Abroad” on the Spades.

Beside him, as the Queen of Spades, is his wife, Cindy McCain, whose nine-figure personal fortune supported her husband’s efforts. Various other prominent figures from politics, media and American culture are featured, all showing their support for the campaign with a range of humorous banners, including the late Ronald Reagan, who points to a sign saying “For conservative values vote McCain”. Several politicians thought to be under consideration as McCain’s running mate wear “VP” badges, namely Mitt Romney, Haley Barbour and John Thune. However, it is notable that Sarah Palin is not featured on any of the cards. The two joker cards show Bill and Hillary Clinton wearing jesters hats!

Parody Productions of Cincinnati, founded in 2003, publish a range of similar novelty decks with sporting and political themes, as well as jigsaw puzzles.



Obama for President!

141 [PARODY PRODUCTIONS]

Obama Presidential Playing Card Deck.

Publication
[Cincinnati, Parody Productions, 2007].

Description
55 colour-printed playing-cards, including two jokers and title-card, portrait of Obama to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard case.

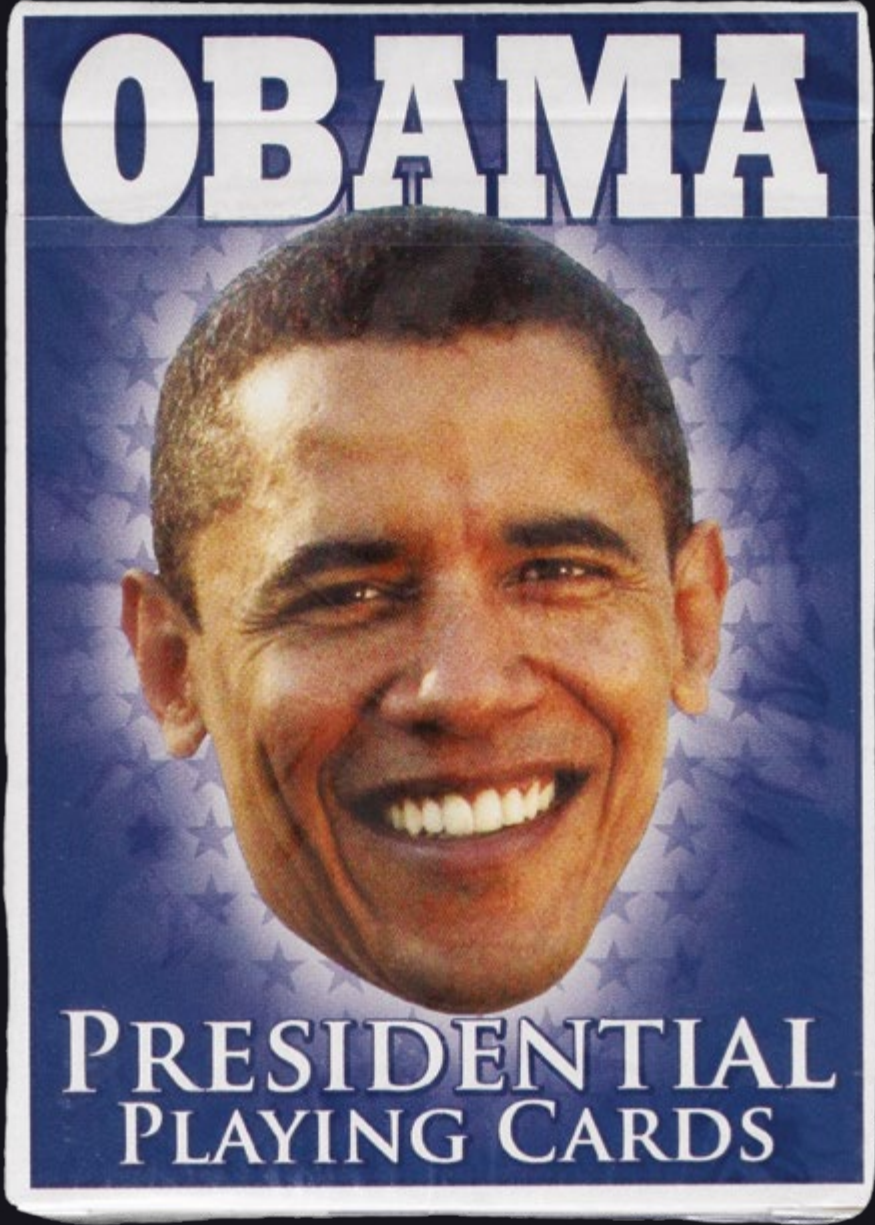
Dimensions
87 by 63mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

Barack Obama announced his candidacy for presidency in February 2007 while standing before the Old State Capitol building in Illinois, where Lincoln had given his 'House Divided' speech 150 years before. Throughout the following months he competed against Hillary Clinton to win the support of the Democratic Party, winning the nomination in June 2008. During the presidential campaign, Obama engaged in three public debates with the Republic candidate John McCain, which he was popularly considered to have won. Finally, on November 4, Obama won the presidency with 52.9% of the popular vote, and 365 electoral votes to McCain's 173, making Obama the first African-American to be elected President of the United States.

The present deck of cards was published in 2007 when the outcome of the race for Democrat nomination was still uncertain. Key players in the political game are caricatured as cartoon bodies with enlarged photographic heads. In addition to the Aces, which show a portrait captioned "Obama for President 2008", Obama himself appears on the king cards, vowing to "to serve and protect" and standing "for Truth, Justice and the American Way". His wife, Michelle Obama, is featured on the Queen of Spades declaring that "he's such a grateful man". In contrast, his opponent Hillary Clinton is featured as the Queen of Hearts, holding a sign saying "I voted for the war", while her husband Bill is shown on the Jack of Clubs wearing an apron and asking "do you really want me as first lady?".

Various other prominent figures from politics, media and American culture are featured, all showing their support for the campaign with a range of humorous banners, including George Clooney on the Eight of Diamonds and Michael J. Fox on the Five of Diamonds. Although he had not yet selected him as his running mate, Joe Biden appears on the Six of Hearts, stating that Obama is "articulate and mainstream". The two joker cards show George W. Bush and Dick Cheney wearing jester's hats!

Parody Productions of Cincinnati, founded in 2003, publish a range of similar novelty decks with sporting and political themes, as well as jigsaw puzzles.



Giuliani for President!

142 [PARODY PRODUCTIONS]
Rudy Presidential Playing Cards.

Publication
[Cincinnati, Parody Productions, 2007].

Description
55 colour-printed playing-cards, including two jokers and title-card, portrait of Rudy to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard case.

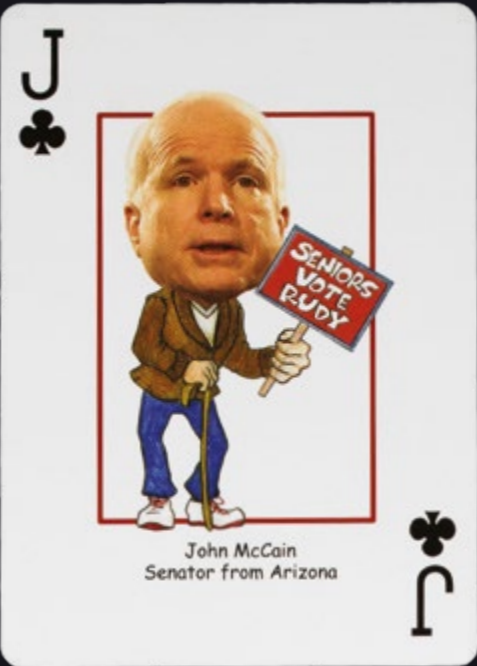
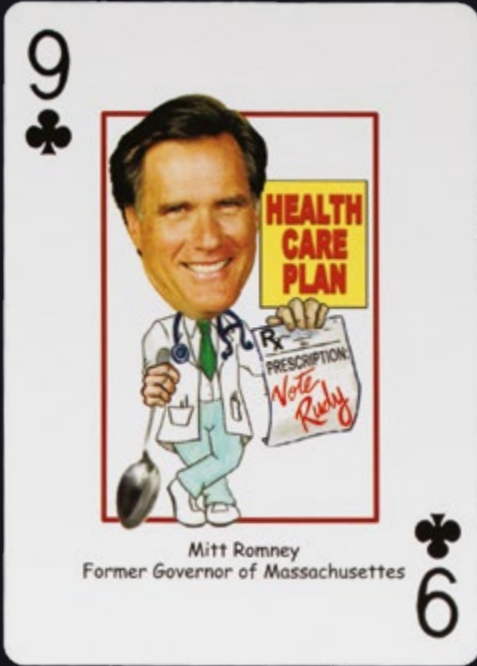
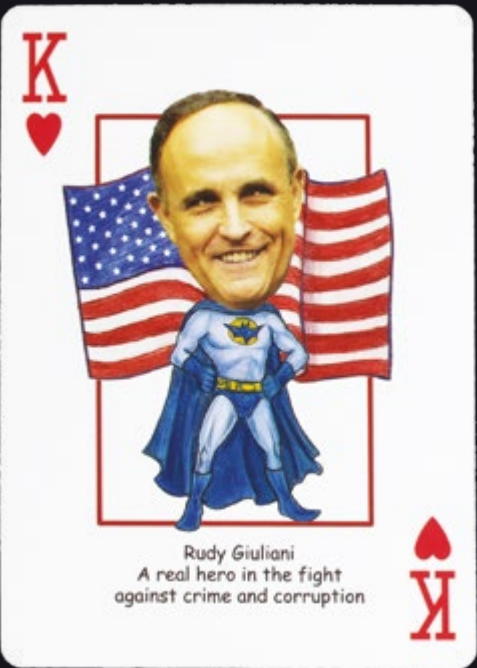
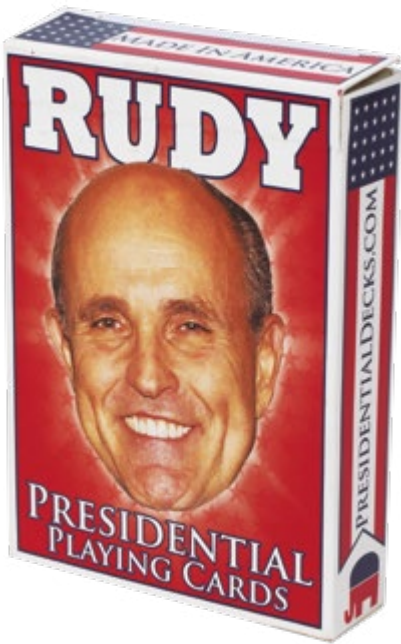
Dimensions
89 by 64mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

In 2007, previous Associate Attorney General and then-mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani confirmed that he would begin campaigning for the Republican Party's presidential nomination in the upcoming general election. His international recognition, largely thanks to his handling of the 9/11 attacks, meant that he started out strong in the early polls. That he had support from influential parties, such as the Christian Broadcasting Network, only reinforced his popularity among registered Republicans. However, reports of fraudulent activity during his time as Mayor of New York, as well as compromising clients at his private law firm of Giuliani Partners, weakened his position, and he finally withdrew from the race in January 2008 to endorse John McCain.

The present deck of cards was published in 2007 when Giuliani remained in the race for Republican nomination, and therefore the Ace of each suit promotes "Rudy for President 2008", accompanied by a large portrait of the politician. He also features as the King, promising "Lower taxes and programs that work, keep our economy strong" on the King of Spades, advising "when leadership matters....go with a proven winner" on the Diamonds, proclaiming that "America leads the way in the global war on terror" on the Clubs, and labelled "A real hero in the fight against crime and corruption" on the Hearts. His then-wife, Judith Giuliani, who worked in pharmaceuticals, appears as the Queen of Spades dressed as a nurse and holding a sign saying "He's a survivor", in reference to his well-publicised battle with cancer during the early 2000s.

The rest of the cards depict many of the *dramatis personae* of the 2008 election, all caricatured as cartoon bodies with large photographic heads. These figures include Giuliani's two competitors in the Republican race, Mitt Romney, dressed as a doctor and holding a prescription reading "Vote Rudy", and John McCain, who walks with a stick and holds a sign saying "Seniors vote Rudy". Among his other "supporters" appears the famous evangelist Billy Graham, who claims he will "say a prayer for Rudy", despite Graham having never openly endorsed Giuliani's nomination. On the Six of Diamonds, Governor of Mississippi Haley Barbour wears a "VP" badge; although there was no significant formal political relationship between the two, Barbour's prominence within the party led many to think he would be called as running mate by the Republican candidate. The two joker cards show Bill and Hillary Clinton wearing jesters hats!

Parody Productions of Cincinnati, founded in 2003, publish a range of similar novelty decks with sporting and political themes, as well as jigsaw puzzles.



Trump 2024

143 [PARODY PRODUCTIONS]

Trump Presidential Playing-Cards.

Publication
[Cincinnati, Parody Productions], 2024.

Description
56 colour-printed playing-cards, including two jokers, title-card, and blank, portrait of Trump to versos, housed in original publisher's printed cardboard case.

Dimensions
80 by 58mm (3.25 by 2.25 inches).

The 2024 US Presidential election saw Republican nominee and 45th president Donald Trump win 312 electoral votes against Democratic candidate Kamala Harris's 226. Trump thus became the second president ever elected to a non-consecutive second term in office.

For the 2024 election season, Parody Productions published a new edition of their Trump playing-cards first issued in 2016. "The Donald" features on the King and Ace cards, and is accompanied by various family members on the other court cards. Supporters including Elon Musk, Nigel Farage, Tucker Carlson and Kanye West also appear, while "Sleepy Joe" is mocked on the joker, as which he is depicted wearing a jester's hat.



Eighteenth century domino cards

144 [ANONYMOUS]

[Domino cards].

Publication
[France, eighteenth century].

Description
52 bone and ebony dominoes with playing card designs engraved and painted, housed in a mahogany box, lid cracked but intact.

Dimensions
32 by 22mm (1.25 by75 inches).

Today there remains little evidence of the eighteenth century phenomenon of domino playing-cards. The main reason for this is the obvious fact that they do not lend themselves to card-play: the small, thick pieces of engraved ebony and bone are not easy to fan-out, stack or shuffle, and the boxes in which they are stored make them inconvenient to transport. Nonetheless, the carefully engraved and painted pip marks and full-length figures on domino cards like, the present set, make for a beautiful *objet d'affection*, treasured by game enthusiasts for centuries. Despite their commercial failure, domino playing-cards made a reappearance at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1855, where an ivory set was presented. Few examples appear to have been manufactured since.



The bureau typographique

145 ?[MILEI]

Bureau typographique pour les commencants.

Publication
Lyon, 1782.

Description
Wooden bureau with 120 slots, with painted text, containing thousands of playing cards with letterpress text to versos, original clasp (now rusted), old woodworm holes.

Dimensions
1173 by 353 by 115mm.
Lid: 435mm.

Eighteenth century pedagogue Louis Dumas invented the “bureau typographique” as a means of teaching children to read and write in an interactive way. In roughly 1730, inspired by the experimental methods of John Locke, he commissioned the construction of a bureau attached to a desk, in the slots of which were housed small pieces of cardboard or indeed playing-cards, each with a letter, phoneme, number or punctuation mark stencilled on it. Later variations also had slots for musical notes! Children would pull out different cards from the bureau and lay them on the desk to form words and phrases. The bureau typographique soon became popular among elite families who could afford such apparatus.

The present example, made in Lyon in 1782, has 120 slots, each filled with playing cards on the back of which is letterpress text. In addition to the elements required in reading and writing, there are also cards bearing phrases relating to geography and fables. Along the vertical edges of the bureau there are decorative fleurs-de-lis, a symbol that would be banned only a decade later during the Revolution.



Standing bureau typographique

146 [ANONYMOUS]
[Bureau typographique].

Publication
[France, late-eighteenth century].

Description
Wooden bureau on fold-away legs with 96 slots, with painted text, containing thousands of playing cards with letterpress text to versos, original hook and eye, painted green, multiple paint stains, scuffed and scratched, desk lid cracked, old woodworm holes.

Dimensions
850 by 395 by 100mm.
Lid: 380mm.
Full height: 815mm.

The scratches and splatters on the desk of this standing bureau typographique are testament to centuries of use, as children reached into the 96 slots for the cards within and laid them on the surface to form their first written sentences.

The lowest row contains miniscule letters of the alphabet, with majuscule letters in the row above. The top two rows are dedicated to digraphs, prefixes and suffixes, prepositions, verbs in the first, second and third person (“je”, “tu”, “il”), numbers, and miscellaneous categories such as days of the week and months of the year.

A smaller bureau, this example may have been designed for less affluent families, or a school.



The bureau typographique, with new topics

147 [ANONYMOUS, cards by LAURET, Étienne]

Bureau typographique contenant les principes de la lecture de l'orthographe et de la prononciation Française.

Publication
[France], 1789.

Description
Wooden bureau with 112 slots, with painted text, containing over 4,000 playing cards with letterpress text to versos, original strike plate, old woodworm holes.

Dimensions
1660 by 318 by 80mm.
Lid: 300mm.

The present bureau typographique, made in 1789, contains more slots than the original bureaux designed earlier that century by Louis Dumas; its topics have been expanded to include various grammatical terms such as prepositions, conjunctions and participles, as well as fables and geographical terms. The fact that the letters of the alphabet are found on the lowest row and the grammatical terminology on the highest, suggests that the bureau was designed so that children could access intellectually-higher levels as they physically grew.

Across the top of the bureau, it is noted that it “contains the principles of reading, spelling and punctuation in French” (contenant les principes de la lecture de l’orthographe et de la prononciation Française). The similarity of this phrase to the title of a prominent educational book on the same subject - Viard’s ‘Les vrais principes de la lecture, de l’orthographe et de la prononciation française’ - indicates that the contents of this particular bureau may have been inspired by Viard’s pedagogic principles. The playing-cards on which the letters and phrases have been printed were made by Étienne Lauret in Nîmes, and exhibit the Provence pattern.



Playing card dominos

148 [ANONYMOUS]

[Domino cards].

Publication
[France, probably mid-nineteenth century].

Description
32 bone and ebony dominoes with playing card designs engraved and painted, each with screw in centre, housed in a walnut box.

Dimensions
45 by 22mm (1.75 by.75 inches).
Box: 40 x 195 x 15mm (h x w x l).

The commercial failure of early domino playing-cards may have inspired the maker of the present set to create a more playable version of the game. Whereas other examples tend simply to have the card designs engraved into the surface of the tile, those in this set have the traditional two ends. One end shows a French-suited pip symbol, and on the other is the value, represented either by a number of red or black dots from one to ten, or a court card portrait following the Paris pattern. Such a design means the set could actually be used to play a game: a rulesheet lining the box’s lid elaborates how tiles may be placed end-to-end with matching examples, linking pip marks of the same suit, corresponding numbers, and portraits of the same type of character. In this way, the present set of card-themed dominos seems an improvement on the purely ornamental sets that first emerged in the eighteenth century.



Watercolour playing card tiles

149 [ANONYMOUS]
[Watercolour card tiles].
Publication
[France, probably nineteenth century].
Description
32 engraved playing cards with original hand-colour, pasted on wood, under glass, housed in walnut box.
Dimensions
49 by 28mm (2 by 1 inches).
Box: 55 x 250 x 65mm (h x w x l).

Almost certainly a novelty made for a gaming enthusiast, this set of tiles follows the design for a deck of playing-cards. The 32 tiles show French-suited number cards from Seven to Ten and mythological-themed court cards, each of which depicts a full-length figure of a classical god or goddess. The King of Clubs is Neptune holding his trident, while Persephone appears as the Queen of Spades accompanied by the (rather small!) three-headed dog Cerberus, who guards the gates of the underworld. The small glass-covered wooden frames in which each aquarelle card is contained makes the tiles utterly unusable for playing most card games, but the set nonetheless remains an original and charming ornament.



Playing card shoe

150 [ANONYMOUS]
[Wooded shoe with playing cards].
Publication
[France, probably late-nineteenth century].
Description
Rectangular wooden box, with ten decks of playing cards separated by wooden dividers, pressed by wooden screw rod, polished wooden handle, rod slightly cracked.
Dimensions
660 by 135mm (26 by 5.25 inches).
Cards themselves: 81 x 54mm.

Playing-card shoes were historically found wherever there were collections of decks that needed to be kept in good condition between use, whether in cafes, casinos, pubs or at home. Typically allowing space for ten separate decks of cards, the wood or brass rod could be screwed tighter to ensure both that the cards did not fall out and become lost or mixed-up, and that they were kept flat, as bent, twisted or torn cards can compromise game-playing integrity. The present example was likely manufactured in France during the late-nineteenth century.



Keep your cards close to your foot

151 [ANONYMOUS]
[Playing card shoe].

Publication
[?Nantes, L'Institut Supérieur des Arts Appliqués, 2011].

Description
Shoe constructed of playing cards.

Dimensions
145 by 300mm (5.75 by 11.75 inches).

References
Verame (2014) p107.

A creative and original project by a student of L'Institut Supérieur des Arts Appliqués, this model shoe is constructed out of playing-cards. The heel and sole present the blue patterned verso of the cards; the toe and heelcap are constructed out of court cards with the white backgrounds removed; the vamp consists of white card with cut-outs in the shape of the four pip symbols; the tongue of the shoe is formed from whole number cards with the white removed but the black and red pip symbols remaining. The cards used in the project are of the traditional Paris pattern with double-figure court cards representing famous historical and mythological figures. On the toe of the shoe, Rachel appears as the Queen of Diamonds, while Alexander is the King of Clubs.



Get your head in the game

152 [ANONYMOUS]
[Playing card skull].

Publication
[Twenty-first century].

Description
Resin skull with removable cranium.

Dimensions
135 by 180mm (5.25 by 7 inches).

A unique novelty, this playing card-themed skull serves as a storage box, with the top of the cranium removed to access the hollow interior.



Playing-card wrappers

153 [VARIOUS]

[Wrappers from various decks of play-cards].

Publication
[1700-1962].

Description
76 decorative wrappers (various sizes and formats), colour-printed, four with woodblock design, 30 with original printed paper wrap-around band and inked tax stamps, five with peepholes and flaps, one accompanied by four lithograph playing cards, grid design with dots and stars to versos, six laid on card, some wrappers creased, torn with loss.

A collection of paper wrappers that served as the original packaging for decks of playing-cards, from 1700 to the mid-twentieth century.

One of earliest, made by Joseph Marchard of Grenoble around 1730, shows a winged female figure sitting astride a cannon with all manner of military accoutrements surrounding her. A variety of such illustrations are found across the wrappers, including heraldic features such as eagles, lions and crests, portraits of royalty, caricatures, and notable places and buildings. Some depict symbols and figures associated with luck; for example a mid-nineteenth century German deck by Johann Steinberger has its title flanked by the Roman deities Mercury and Ceres, the former being associated with luck and the latter with abundance. Among the twentieth century examples are a collection of wrappers for Van Genechten’s “Great Mogul” deck, made suitably luxurious and exotic through the use of gold paint. The name and address of the cardmaker is often given, in some cases accompanied by an illustration of their headquarters.

Occasionally, the wrappers display large punched holes, perhaps to void the tax stamp or to prevent other traders reselling the deck as new. Others have the remnants of pasted sheets, which would have been used to seal the packaged deck, and often have blank spaces to which the tax stamp would be applied. Some wrappers have text providing information about the duties and tariffs that the deck was subject to, for example: “For exportation. Fifty Pounds Penalty if Relanded; and Twenty Pounds if Sold or Used in Great Britain”. Indeed, if the cards were intended for export, the wrapper could be expected to bear a number of languages; the examples here include text in English, Dutch, German, Spanish, French, Arabic, Greek, Armenian and Chinese.



Noting Napoleonic history on “fine French” playing-cards

154 BÜRGERS, J. P.

*Feine Franz-Karten [and]
Franzoesische Piquet Karten.*

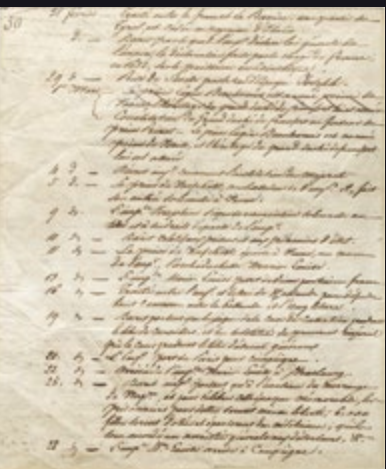
Publication
Cologne, J.P. Bürgers, c1797.

Description
Two decorative paper wrappers, printed in blue, with near-contemporary manuscript annotations to both sides.

Dimensions
300 by 260mm (11.75 by 10.25 inches).

These documents suggest an intriguing story: each sheet is a wrapper for a deck of playing-cards attributed to J.P. Bürgers; that on the first sheet it is for his No. 3 deck, captioned “Feine Franz[oesische]-Karten” (Fine French Cards), and that on the second for his French Piquet cards (“Franzoesische Piquet Karten”). Indeed, it was common for cards from North Germany to be labelled “Franzoesische” (French) due to the fact that their designs were generally derived from the Paris pattern. While there is a record of a certain J.P. Bürgers in a Cologne directory of 1855, that individual is listed as a tobacco merchant rather than a cardmaker. The maker of these wrappers may have been his father, active earlier in the same city.

Interestingly, the wrappers seem to have been used not [only] to store playing-cards, but to keep a record of French history. Hand-written around the prints on both sheets is a continuous chronology, in French, of the events of the late-eighteenth century, particularly in 1796. Naturally, the activities of Napoleon Bonaparte feature heavily, including his victory at Battle of Montenotte on April 12, and the signing of the Armistice of Cherasco 16 days later. It may be the case that the owner of the Bürger cards made use of their packaging to keep track of the events that would eventually have a huge impact on both France and Germany.



Italian edicts concerning playing cards

155 [VARIOUS ITALIAN GOVERNMENTS]

[Collection of official acts in Italian].

Publication [Italy], 1640-1922.

Description 83 items (various formats and sizes). 159 leaves, original working autograph and holograph manuscript in Italian, letterpress and lithographed documents, woodcut emblems, initials, and stamps, some coloured, pasted and inked stamps, manuscript annotations throughout, blue paper wrappers to one, others disband, some uneven toning and light staining, some minor tears to extremities with loss.

83 acts of various Italian governments discussing the latest rules and regulations for the sale of playing cards.

From the fourteenth century onwards, the various states, kingdoms and republics that preceded modern-day Italy produced a wide range of card games and decks with which to play them. Spanish, French and German suits, as well as local variants, appear in historic Italian decks, which almost always include the “Re” (King), “Cavallo” (Knight) and “Fante” (Knav) as their court cards, with the addition of the “Donna” (Queen) in tarocchi cards. Purchased and played at every level of society, cards became an important target for kings and governments in the perennial task of raising state revenue.

The present collection of documents provides evidence of three hundred years of taxes, prohibitions and regulations on playing-cards, from a typical edict of 1640 stating that “anyone, regardless of their rank, status and condition... cannot sell, give, or in any way trade cards or tarots of any kind... unless they are stamped with the [tax] stamp”, to a form from 1922 with which one Pisano Giovanni di Domenico applied for a gambling licence to host card games.

Other interesting documents include examples of the tax stamps obligatory for decks based on their size and form, directives presenting new rules and restrictions (and their penalties!) on playing-card production, notices about banned games, and, in true Italian style, many reminders of previous legislation that was apparently not being obeyed. There is even a manuscript record of the trial of one Francesco Balestrero, who in 1815 was sentenced to six months in prison with corporal punishment, for the crime of permitting gambling in his osteria!

The directives were taken seriously, with the military ordered “to arm, help, and reinforce the search for fraud, both in the fortresses and quarters, as well as in any other place, and to secure the fraudsters”. Indeed, it was held to be a moral issue, with Pope Pius VI reminding his “bold and unruly subjects” that “the aforementioned edict is still in full force” and that those who violated it would be punished. Another church decree lists a number of banned games, while an apostolic delegation of 1833 reproached those “dissolute persons” whose enjoyment of wine and gaming result in “clamour, frequent brawls, and quarrels” in public places.

Consequently, such documents were sent “to the shopkeepers, coffee-shop owners, innkeepers and other public game keepers to carefully monitor” the presence and legitimacy of gambling. They were obliged “to keep a printed copy of this manifesto posted in the shops, inns, halls or rooms where gambling is usually held”, all in pursuit of the “re-establishment of custom, tranquillity and good order, necessary foundations for public happiness, and therefore incompatible with the games thus prohibited”.

The present acts serve as evidence of the social, economic and political importance of playing cards in Europe over the past centuries.



French edicts concerning playing cards

156 [VARIOUS French GOVERNMENTS]

[Collection of official acts in French].

Publication [France], 1698-1847.

Description 40 letterpress documents (various formats and sizes). 84 leaves, broadsheets, pamphlets, one with playing card design hand-coloured in part, a receipt completed in a contemporary manuscript hand, woodcut emblems and decoration, manuscript annotations throughout, two printed on blue paper, one bound in green marbled paper, others disbound, some tears and pale stains, mild creasing, one unevenly toned from early glue.

40 acts of various French governments discussing the latest rules and regulations for the sale of playing cards.

Thanks mainly to his unsuccessful military exploits, the Sun King, Louis XIV, had rather depleted the French revenues by the turn of the eighteenth century. In order to replenish the State's finances, by some "extraordinary aid", the idea of taxing playing-cards emerged, a practice that would continue throughout the subsequent centuries. The present documents provide a history of French playing-card regulation during both monarchy and republic.

Although in 1701, a duty of 18 pence was placed on each deck, the fact that the cards themselves cost nearly as much to produce, and the fall in sales owing to the increased price, manufacturers began to recuperate their losses through fraudulent means. The following decades therefore saw many attempts by Kings Louis XIV, XV and XVI, to find the tipping-point at which they could maximise profits from the taxation without driving both cardmakers and players to illegally-sold decks. At certain times, all "games of chance" were even outlawed throughout the kingdom, a measure which may appear counterproductive until it is made clear that the fines collected as penalties from those who transgressed the ban, which could run into thousands of francs, were to be shared equally between the king and the informant. The rulers may have realised that they had a better chance of profiting off of illegal activity than legal!

The punishments were not only monetary but, as many of the present documents warn, cardmakers could have their premises searched at any time without warning, their tools confiscated, and wares seized and destroyed. Louis XV even appointed a manager, Jean-Baptiste Bocquillon, whose sole responsibility it was to oversee and execute the royal regulations on playing-cards.

Following the Revolution, state interference in, and expropriation of, the industry became even stricter. All sorts of restrictions were placed on manufacturers, down to what paper they could use; cardmakers were also required to provide their names, addresses, number of plates, employee details, and places of intended manufacture, which were then entered onto a public register. Furthermore, in the spirit of republicanism, the National Convention decreed that the royal portraits and signs of feudalism on playing-cards should "disappear". As a result, some manufacturers repurposed existing stock as educational material, while others set about designing new court cards, with the Kings, Queens, and Jacks replaced by personifications and allegorical figures, with many of them naturally opting to depict the values of "liberté, égalité, fraternité".



In the nineteenth century, Imperial Decrees continued to govern the playing-card industry with Emperor Napoleon I issuing edicts to establish various new controls, which were to be displayed in public and private spaces alike. As during the *ancien régime*, the imperial government went back and forth on measures, abolishing the five cent duty on exported playing-cards, for instance, when it became apparent that it allowed German and Belgian cardmakers to outcompete their French counterparts. Interestingly, many of these decrees are dated according to the French Republican calendar, which was in use from the storming of the Bastille until January 1, 1860. A short-lived horological phenomenon, the calendar substituted “the Common Era” for “l’ère républicaine”, signifying a move away from Christianity. Months with connotations of catholic saints were replaced with secular titles, such as “brumaire”, or “fog”, standing in place of October.

This collection of French acts reflects the turbulent nature of modern French history, and how playing-cards played a role in the many forms of authority employed to govern the country, and at times its empire.

251
REST
ARLEMENT
RENOBLE,
DEFENSES A TOVTES

N. 17
DECLARATION
DU ROY,
Donnée à Versailles au mois de Mars 1703.

ORTANT QUE LE DROIT
de dix-huit deniers, ordonné être établi sur cha-
cun Ieu de Cartes ou Tarots, sera reduit & mo-
deré à douze deniers, à commencer au mois
d'Avril prochain.

1 juillet 1703.

1, Roy de France
Viennois, Comte
s ceux qui ces pré-
Par nôtre Edit du
, Nous avons Or-
-é à nôtre no-



NAPOLEONE,

Dio e per le Costituzioni, Imperatore de
e Protottore della Confederazione del P

qui fixe
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on et 1703
milib, et
u thog un
oup, oup
ia, 1703
ration
ant re

Donnée à Versailles le 16 Février
Registree en Parlement, Chambre des Comptes &
LOUIS, PAR LA GRACE DE
DE FRANCE ET DE NAVA
ceux qui ces présentes lettres verront :
tous les moyens qui nous ont é



DECLARATION
DU ROY,

Donnée à Fontainebleau le 21. Octobre 1746.

QUI ordonne ce qui doit être fait pour la perception
droit établi sur les Cartes par celle du
16. Février 1745.

Registree en Parlement.



LOUIS par la grace de Dieu, Roy de France
& de Navarre, Dauphin de Viennois, Comte
de Valentinois & Dyois, à tous ceux qu
ces présentes Lettres verront, SALUT. Pa
notre Déclaration du seize Février 1744

Nous avons ordonné le rétablissement d'un
sur chaque jeu de cartes & tarots qui avoit é
Edit du mois d'Octobre 1701. pour être perçu
ment audit Edit & à la Déclaration du dis
1703. mais comme les négo-

351
EDIT DU ROY

Donné à Fontainebleau au mois d'Octobre

PORTANT ETABLISSEME
profit de Sa Majesté d'un droit de
deniers sur chaque Ieu de Cartes à joü
glement pour les Maîtres Cartiers.

Publié en Audiance publique le 21. de Novembre



Wall in gamblers! Pocket the change!

157 PARLEMENT DE GRENOBLE [and]
LA COUR DE PARLEMENT

*Arrest du Parlement de Grenoble
[and] de la Cour de Parliament.*

Publication
Grenoble, Alexandre [and] Gaspard Giroud,
17 Decembre 1733.

Description
Quarto pamphlet (235 by 180mm). Two
leaves, woodcuts fleur-de-lys design, very
slight staining, disbound.

A judgement from the Parliament of Grenoble, printed with the intention of circulating the royal command to ban “games of chance”.

King Louis XIV instructed the court at Grenoble in 1698 to pass on the message: gambling was to be banned throughout France. He explicitly forbade certain games, such as dice, Hoca, Pharaoh, and the same games under different nomenclature. This included “suffering” these card games in their homes, as well as the deliberate hosting of “public societies” as an excuse to gamble.

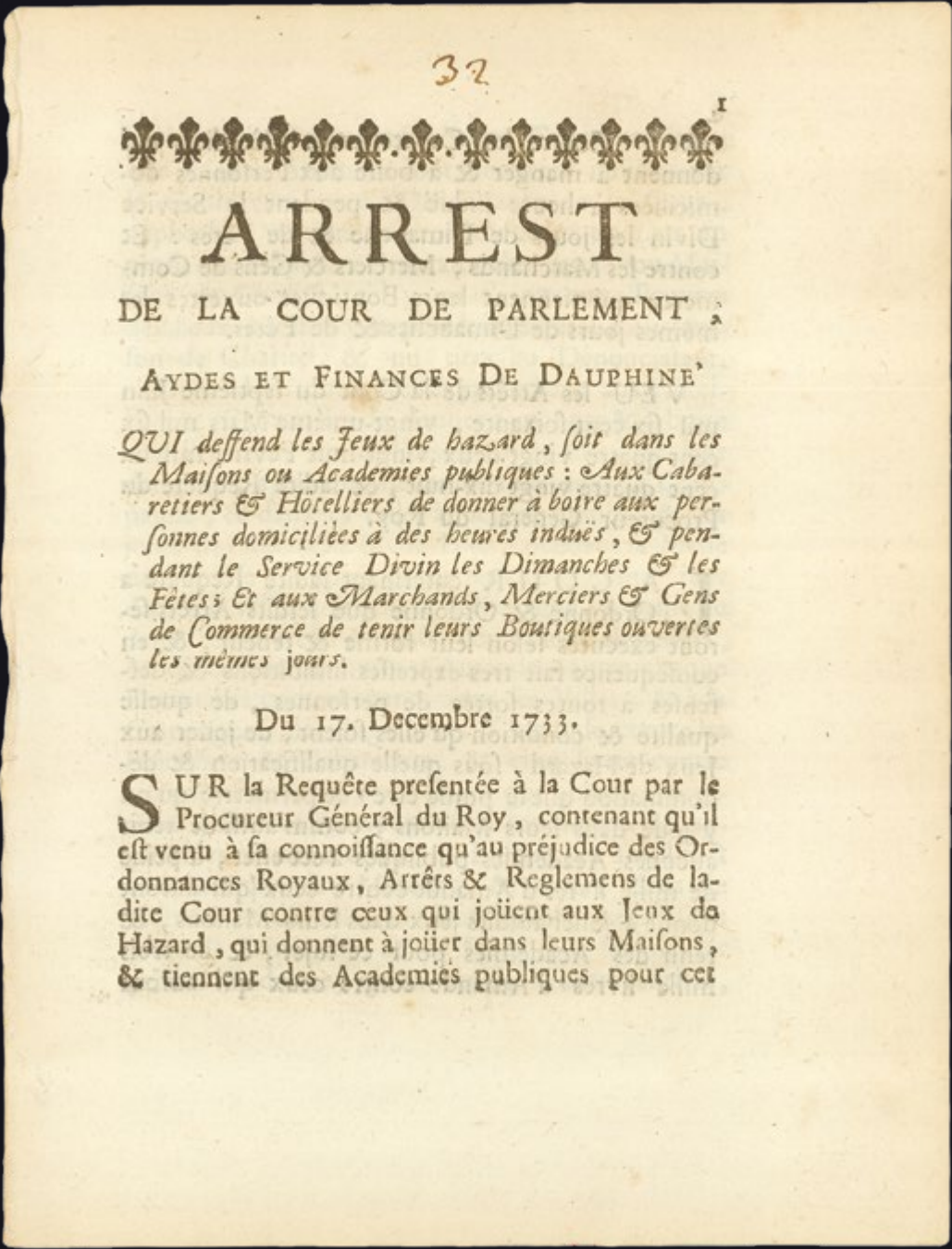
In the present document, published under King Louis XV, the banned games are not named. Rather, all “games of chance” are outlawed in no uncertain terms. Whatever one’s quality or station, whether at home or in public, it was the wish of the monarchy to steer France away from gambling of all kinds.

The punishments for contraventions were steep. One was fined 1,000 livres if caught playing at home; gambling hosts had this fine thricefold.

The funds collected from such penalties were initially to be shared equally between the king and the denouncer of the crime. By the time of the present example, the haul was to be split into thirds. The king and informant would take their share, with the leftover being donated to hospitals, charities, or “the poor” if the former two options were unavailable in that area.

This pamphlet was read aloud, posted to the crossroads outside Grenoble’s city centre, and sent out to other named provinces across France. This was to ensure that ignorance of the law would be no excuse if someone were caught red-handed.

The warning did not seem to deter gamblers: by 1748, King Louis XV had ordered the houses of gamblers to be walled up for six months, with a further 1,000 livre fine if this was ignored.



A tax of 1 sous, or a fine of 10,000 livres?

158 Declaration du Roi

Publication
Paris [and] Grenoble, Alexandre Giroud [and]
P.G. Simon, 1781.

Description
Quarto pamphlet (250 by 195mm). Four
leaves, woodcut emblem, paginated by
hand, disbound.

Proclaiming a total ban on gambling.

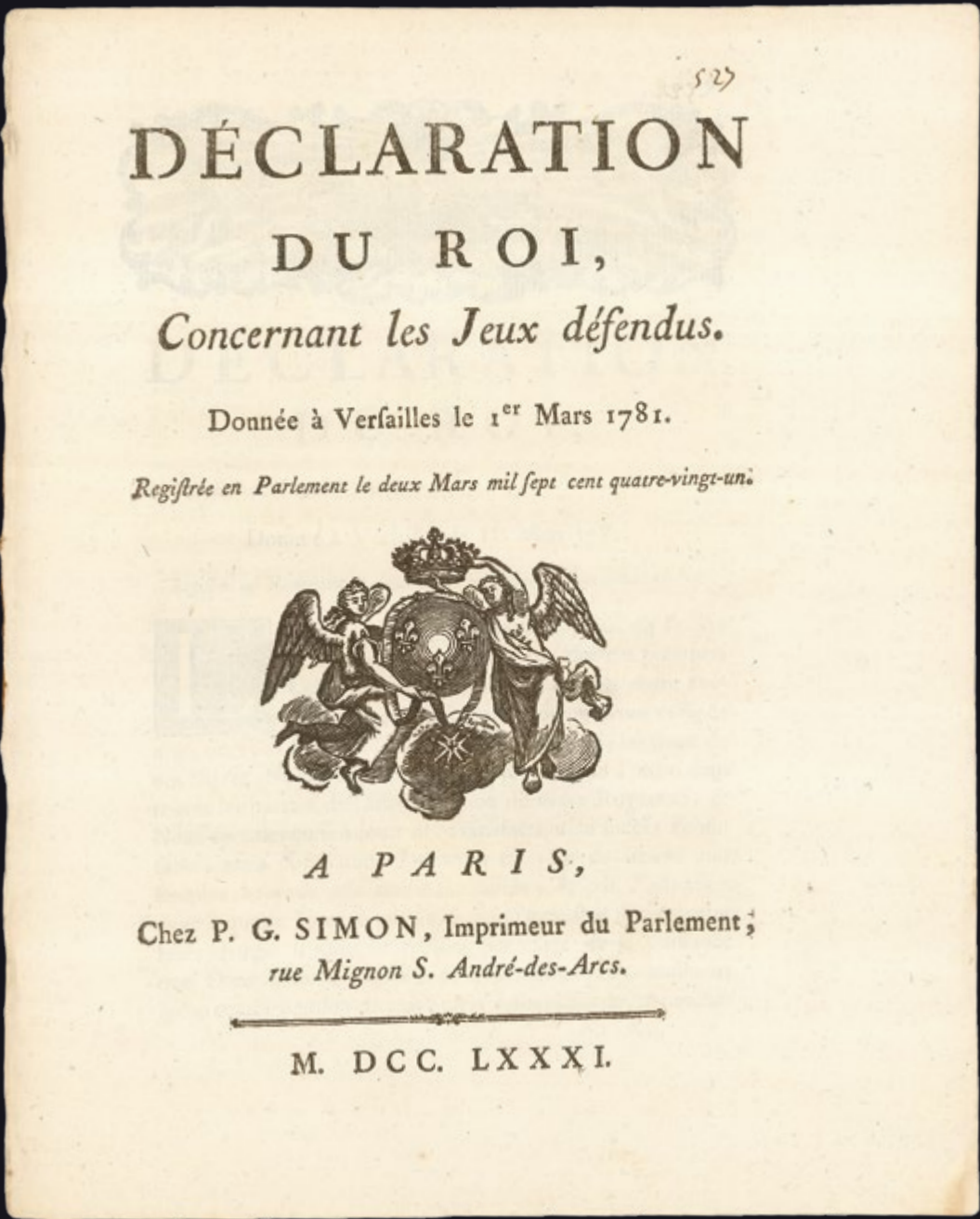
In 1701, a duty of 18 sous was placed on playing-cards. With the cards themselves costing nearly as much to produce, and the increased price leading to a fall in card consumption, manufacturers began to recuperate their losses through fraudulent means. By 1703, King Louis XIV had quickly reduced this levy to 12 sous, in an attempt to control the black market and encourage government-controlled manufacture.

However, in 1745, King Louis XV reinstated the original charge of 18 sous. He claimed repeatedly that this was the “least onerous” duty possible to his subjects, and that this tax was needed for the benefit of the State - most likely to replenish France’s coffers after its military conflicts with Britain during the Second Hundred Years War.

Thenceforth, all playing and tarot cards, including figures and portraits, were to be made with paper stamped by the tax collector. Cards must be sealed in envelopes - which were also subject to a duty of one sous per envelope. If any café, tobacconist, or ping-pong playing establishment was caught suffering card games, they would be fined 3,000 livres. Players would be charged 1,000 livres each, and the cards would be confiscated.

In 1751, King Louis changed track. No longer would the duty go towards the State; rather, his L'Ecole Militaire would be its charitable recipient. With his full royal authority, King Louis raised the duty from 18 sous per deck, to one sous per card.

Having not learnt the lesson from his predecessor, Louis XV struggled to restrain the consequent proliferation of fraudulent card manufacturing and distribution. By the present pamphlet’s publication in 1781, his declaration threatened a total ban on gambling. The initial fine of 1,000 livres steeply rose with every repeated offence, and hosts of card games could face up to 10,000 livres in fines. The King is all too clear in his response to those who cannot afford to pay - one risks gambling on pain of imprisonment.



159 LA CONVENTION NATIONALE

Decret de la Convention Nationale.

Publication
Chaumont, Chez Bouchard, Du 1.^{er} jour du
2.^e mois de l'an second [22nd October 1793].

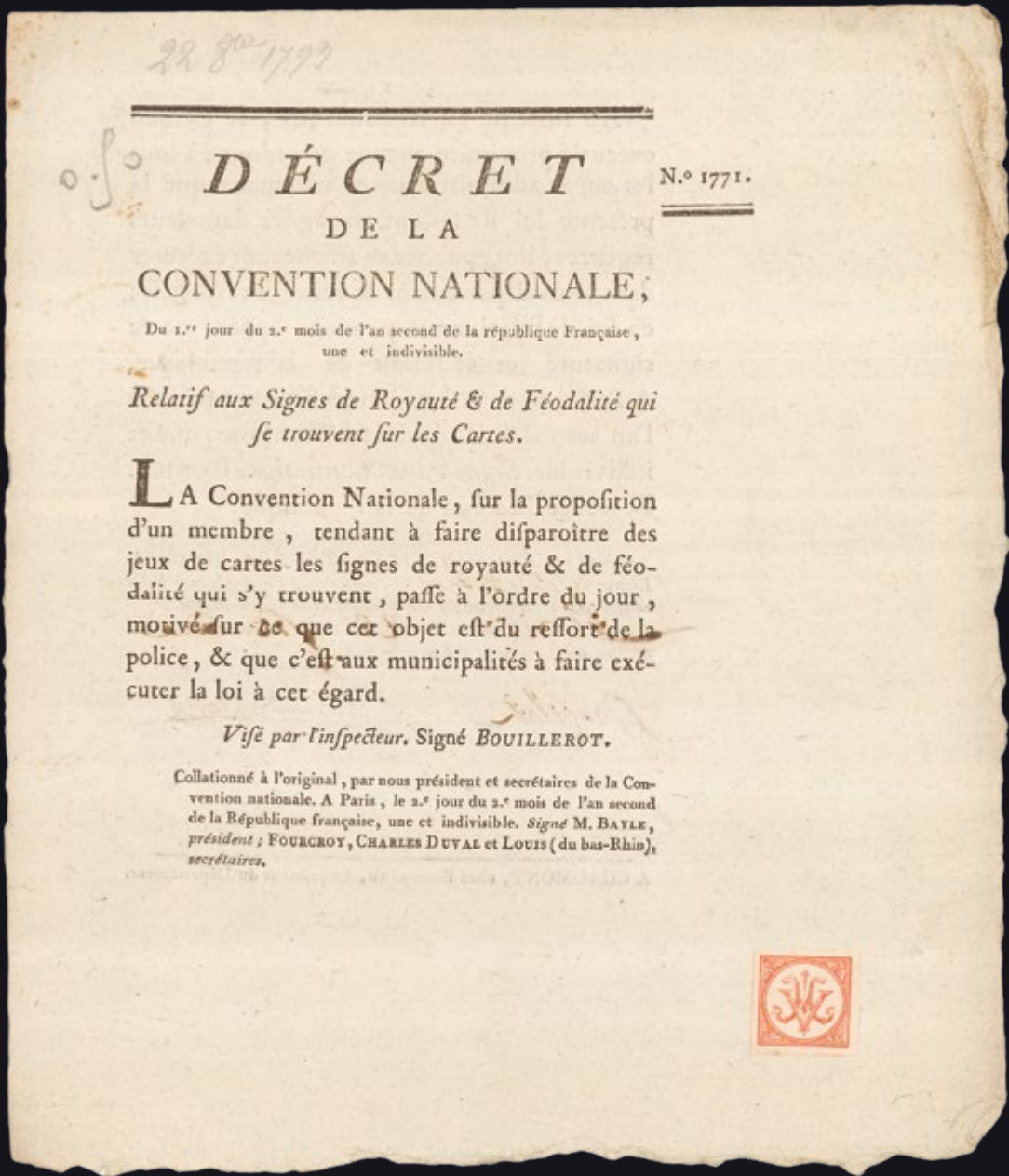
Description
Single folio leaf (250 by 215mm). Printed on
both sides, on blue paper, several signatures
to verso.

A decree by the newly-formed French Republic to ban all signs of royalty and feudalism on playing-cards.

On 2 June 1793, a committee called the National Convention was selected to represent the Republic of France - the new system of power after the execution of King Louis XV. With no need for the outdated remnants of a monarchical past, France was keen to show her new revolutionary colours. One member of the committee suggested that the royal portraits and signs of feudalism on playing-cards should “disappear”.

With the stamp of the Republic and the signature of Louis-Jerome Gohier (1746-1830), the previous Minister of Justice and a key representative of the Republic, the order was executed. Administrative bodies were tasked with presenting and posting the new law, with the police under strict instruction to ensure that it was regulated.

The pamphlet does not list any alternatives for how the court cards should be represented, nor does it state how exactly this new law ought to be enforced. It took imagination from the card manufacturers as to how they would respond to such a strong command. Some repurposed the cards as educational materials, others substituted the Kings, Queens, and Jacks for personifications of Genius, Liberty and Equality.



Portuguese royal edicts concerning playing cards

160 [PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENTS]

[Collection of official acts in Portuguese].

Publication
[Lisbon], 1705-1812.

Description
Four letterpress documents (various formats and sizes). Eight leaves, woodcut emblem and initial, near-contemporary marginalia to one; modern marbled paper boards to three, endpapers renewed, one waterstained.

Four acts of the Portuguese government discussing the latest rules and regulations for the sale of playing cards.

Issued at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the first document is contract granting cardmaker Manoel Coelho Velozo the right to manufacture playing-cards in Portugal, valid from 1705 to 1711. The following three official acts were issued later, dating from 1808 to 1812, and are evidence of the measures taken by Prince João's government to ensure that the sale of playing-cards in Portugal was generating revenue to support his endeavours. Crowned Queen of Portugal in 1777, Maria I led her country until a series of personal losses in the late 1780s led to severe depression. Subsequently, from 1792, her son João served as prince regent, finally inheriting the throne upon her death in 1816. Despite its great global empire won in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Portugal had suffered economic decline throughout the eighteenth century, and conflicts on the Iberian Peninsula during the early-nineteenth century proved another significant blow. Indeed, in 1807, with Napoleon advancing, Prince João moved the court to Brazil for the safety of the royal family.

The Prince also took action to raise funds for the ongoing war, including increasing taxes, capitalising on the abundant natural resources of Brazil, seeking loans from other countries, namely Great Britain, and centralising revenue collection by the government. While these measures aided the war effort, and may have contributed to the eventual allied victory on the Iberian peninsula, they also led to a great deal of social upheaval and economic disruption. In particular, resentment against increased taxation led to local skirmishes between citizens and the authorities, and contributed to the Liberal Revolution of 1820, which saw an effort to limit King João's power and institute a constitutional monarchy.

Among the products and industries that bore the burden of additional duties were tobacco and playing cards. Seen as luxury items, and heavily monopolised by the state, which controlled importation of tobacco and had its own royal playing card factory, they were easy victims in the government's search for profits. Naturally, the smuggling of these goods increased along with their taxes, and so, especially in view of the Napoleonic invasion of 1807, the Portuguese government grew stricter about enforcing their regulations on the trade. Thus, the Regency Council states in the act of 1808 that "the revenues of the Royal Press, and the Royal Card Factory, are reduced, due to the circumstances that have occurred" and decrees that henceforth "all laws, permits, decrees, editions, notices, and any other orders...be equally and exclusively printed, and reprinted, from this date onwards in the said Royal Press".

A second document, which bears the royal crest above the text, is a notice from "the Administration of the Royal Playing Card Factory; that, despite the requests of the same Board, and the Petitions of its Registrar, some Magistrates have not complied with the said petitions issued for the collection and collection of many debts of this Department with the necessary

TENDO consideração ao estado em que se achão reduzidos os Rendimentos da Impressão Regia, e Real Fabrica das Cartas, pelas circunstancias que tem occorrido; e devendo-se auxiliar estes uteis Estabelecimentos com as Providencias, que forem convenientes para a sua manutenção, não tendo sido bastantes as disposições no Decreto de dezanove de Abril de mil oitocentos e tres, pelo qual foi concedido á mesma Impressão o Privilegio Privativo, e Exclusivo, de que só nella podessem imprimir-se os Papeis descriptos na Relação, que faz parte do nesmo Decreto: Determinamos que todas as Leis, Alvarás, Decretos, Editaes, Avisos, e outras quaesquer Ordens, que levão entrar em o numero daquellas, que constituem Collecções de Leis, e que hajão de publicar-se por meio do Prélo, sejam igual, e exclusivamente impressas, e reimpressas da data deste em diante na dita Impressão Regia, não obstante haverem sahido de outras Officinas. E Ordenamos a mais impla, e rigorosa execução do disposto no referido Decreto de dezanove de Abril de mil oitocentos e tres. A Meza do Desembargo do Paço o tenha assim entendido, e o faça cumprir pela parte que lhe toca, sem embargo de quaesquer Leis, ou Disposições em contrario.

Palacio da Inquisição em nove de Janeiro de mil oitocentos e oito.

Com as Rubricas do CONSELHO DA REGENCIA.

Na Impressão Regia.

TENDO a experiencia mostrado, no decurso de mais de quarenta annos, que a Disposição Economica contida no fim do Paragrafo primeiro dos Privilegios concedidos pelo Alvará de seis de Agosto de mil setecentos e setenta aos Empregados na Administração, Fabrico, e das Cartas de Jogar, onde se diz = E quanto aos Estancos se servirão dos mesmos do Tabaco, por não multiplicar com prejuizo publico = jámais poderá ser inteiramente vel; tanto pela tenuidade do lucro, que se permite aos ueiros, como porque sendo igualmente Privilegiados os baco, são poucos aquelles que procurão se-lo das Cartas: o PRINCIPE REGENTE Nosso Senhor declarar, e assim se fique julgando e decidindo, que todos os Esros de Cartas, legitimamente nomeados, sejam ou não se mesmo tempo do Tabaco, effectivamente gozão e de- zazar para o futuro, em quanto Sua Alteza Real por sua ata Resolução não Ordenar o contrario, além dos mais, ilegio d'Aposentadoria, que se lhes concede na Condi- decima, confirmada pelo Alvará de trinta e hum de Ju- mil setecentos sessenta e nove; devendo todavia a Ad- gão Geral da Impressão Regia escolher com preferencia Tabaco, que quizerem sujeitar-se a vender as referidas As Authoridades a quem pertence o tenham assim en- , executem, e fação executar. Palacio do Governo em de Fevereiro de mil oitocentos e doze.



TEndo-se representado ao PRINCIPE REGENTE Nos- so Senhor por parte da Junta Administrativa, Economi- ca, e Litteraria da Impressão Regia, a cujo cargo esta a Administração da Real Fabrica de Cartas de Jogar; que, a pesar das solicitações da mesma Junta, e Precatorios do seu Conservador, alguns Magistrados não tem cumprido com a pre- cisa promptidão os ditos Precatorios passados para cobrança e arrecadação de muitas dividas desta Repartição; tendo sido igualmente in- fructiferas as Requisições que a muitos devedores se tem feito pela Contadoria da dita Impressão Regia: E Tomando Sua Alteza Real o referido em Consideração: He Servido Mandar o seguinte:

Todos os Provedores, Corregedores, Juizes de Fôra, e Ordi- narios das Terras do Reino darão o mais exacto, e prompto cumprimento aos Precatorios do Conservador da Impressão Regia e Real Fabrica de Cartas de Jogar, qualquer que seja o objecto dos mesmos Precato- rios. Nas Cabeças de suas Comarcas os Provedores, e nas mais Ter- ras dellas os Juizes de Fôra se informarão extrajudicialmente, se os Ad- ministradores das Cartas de Jogar são Pessoas que gozem de conceito de boas Contas; e no caso de acharem essa fama, lhes intimarão, e participarão (sem ser por meio judicial) que observem cada hum nas suas Administrações a seguinte Instrucção, que a dita Junta exige impreterivelmente para a boa direcção deste Ramo de Arrecadação que lhe está confiado, e se contém nos quatro Artigos que se seguem

CONTRATO
DAS
CARTAS
DE
JOGAR, E SOLIMAM,
QUE SE FEZ NO CONSELHO
da Fazenda com Manoel Coelho Vello-
zo por tempo de seis annos, que haõ
de ter principio em 19. de Julho
de 1705. & haõ de dar fim em
outro tal dia de 1711.



precision”. As a result, “His Royal Highness has served to order the following: all ombudsmen, magistrates, foreign judges, and ordinary people in the lands of the kingdom will give the most exact and prompt compliance to the petitions of the conservator of the Royal Press and Royal Card Factory”.

In 1812, another decree was issued, signed by “the Lord Governors of the Kingdom”. It discusses the relationship between the tobacco and playing-card trades. In 1770, it had been decreed that playing-cards would be subject to the same privileges and liabilities as tobacco, which meant that “because of the tenuousness of the profit, which is allowed to the traders, and because those of tobacco are equally privileged, there are few who seek to be part of the [trade in] playing cards”. Consequently, “the Prince Regent, Our Lord, declares...that all traders of playing cards, legitimately appointed, whether or not they are at the same trade as tobacco, effectively enjoy and should enjoy for the future, as long as His Royal Highness by his immediate resolution does not order the contrary, in addition, the Privilege of Retirement”. It is not clear exactly what retirement privileges were granted to those who traded playing-cards, but it seems likely that this act was made to encourage traders to sell decks through official channels liable to government taxes, rather than through the growing black market.

This small collection of edicts reflects how playing-cards have been used for political and economic ends, as well as entertainment, throughout history.



The one shilling tax

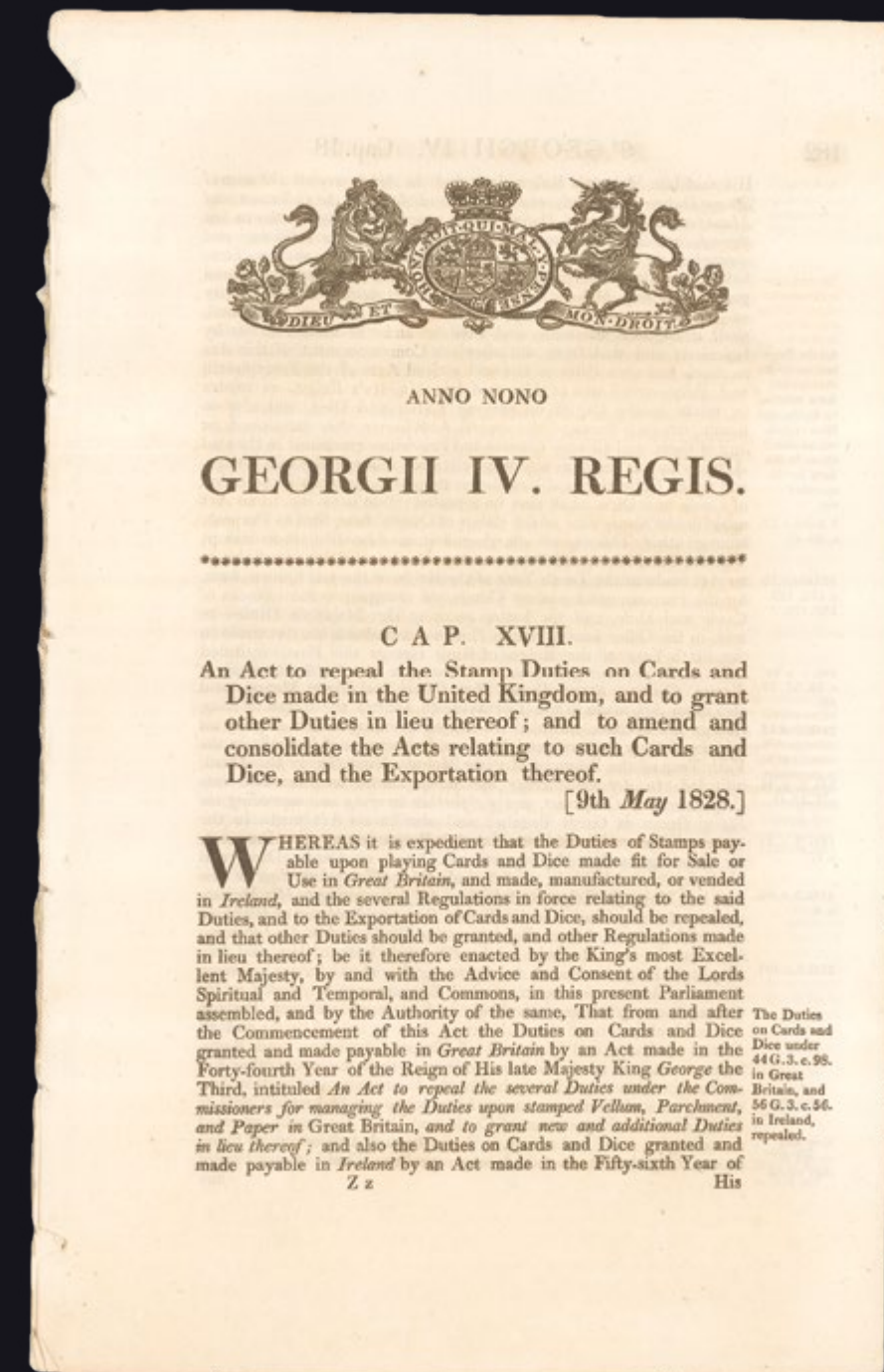
161 GEORGE IV

An Act to repeal the Stamp Duties on Cards.

Publication
[London], 1828.

Description
Folio pamphlet (305 by 190mm). Ten leaves,
disbound.

An act issued by George IV in 1828 repealing the existing tax applied to British playing-cards and dice, and establishing a new tax of one shilling per deck and five shillings for the annual license required to manufacture them. The document decrees that the relevant tax stamp is to appear on the Ace of Spades card in each deck.



Tax stamps for playing cards

162 FERDINAND I

[Imperial edict on tax stamps for playing cards].

Publication
[Vienna, Imperial Press], 1840.

Description
Folio pamphlet (360 by 230mm). Four leaves, disbound.

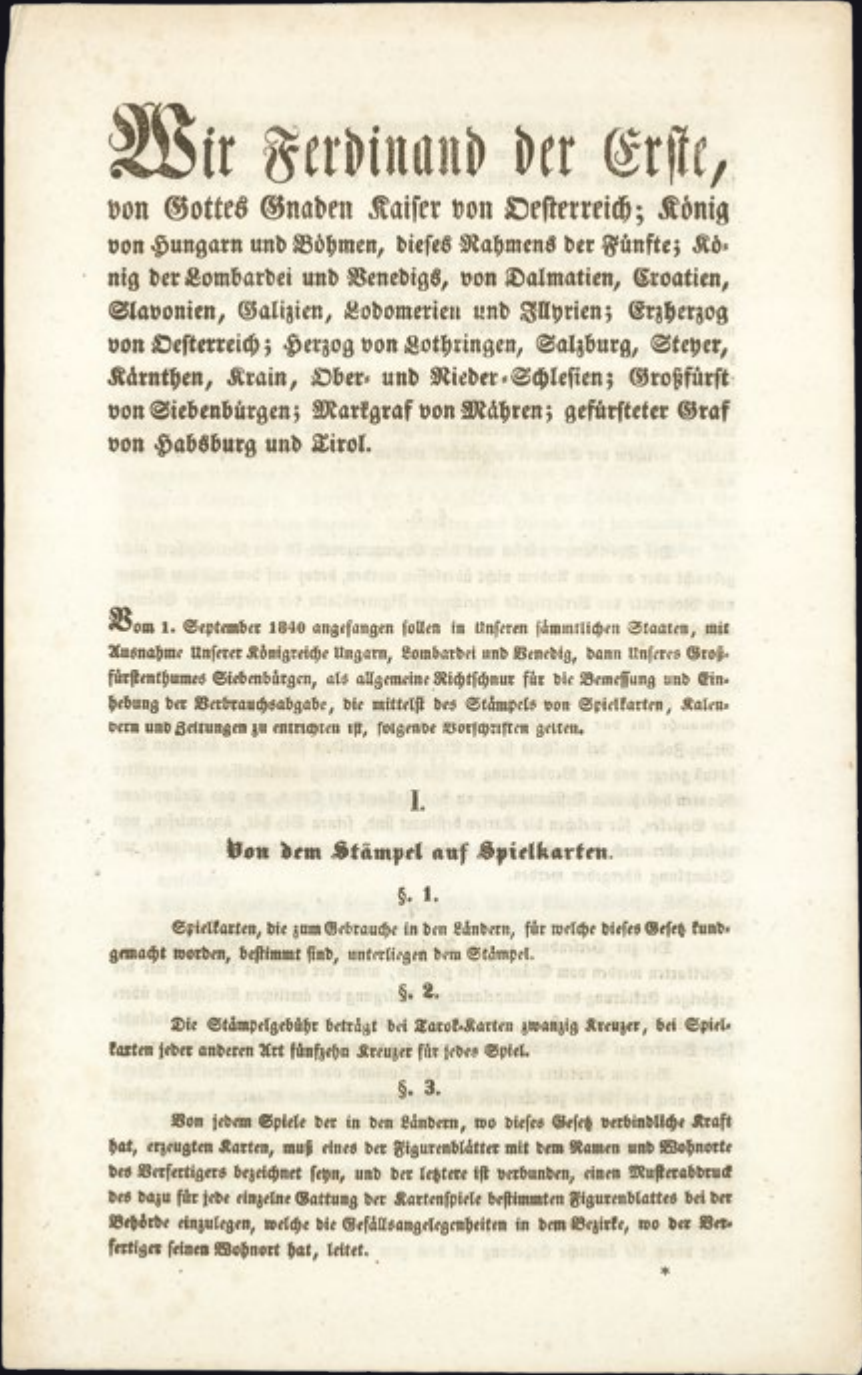
A royal edict issued by Ferdinand I of Austria in 1840, regulating the use of tax stamps on playing-cards.

Ferdinand inherited the Austrian throne, as well as many related titles, from his father Francis I in 1835, but due to his severe epilepsy relied heavily on advisers and relatives throughout his reign, which ended with his abdication in 1848. He was particularly influenced in policy-making by Foreign Minister, Klemens von Metternich, who aimed to conserve the historic social and economic order. Under Ferdinand, therefore, there were strict regulations and restrictions regarding trade, including that of playing-cards.

As industrialisation slowly began to take hold in Austria, tariffs were introduced or increased on foreign goods, with the aim of protecting and promoting the growing domestic market, as well as raising revenue. All playing-cards entering Ferdinand’s states, “with the exception of our kingdoms of Hungary, Lombardy and Benedict, and our Grand Duchy of Transylvania”, were therefore subject to “customs duty, which is to be paid by means of the stamp... The stamping fee is twenty kreutzers for tarot cards and fifteen kreutzers for playing cards of any other kind for each deck”.

Interestingly, Ferdinand’s edict of 1840 not only dictated the fee, but also stipulated that “one of the face cards must be marked with the name and place of residence of the maker, and the maker is obliged to submit a sample copy of the face card intended for each individual deck of card games to the authority which manages the case matters in the district where the maker has his residence”. This third measure may have been intended to ensure that the manufacture and sale of playing-cards were directed through the official, and taxable, channel.

Such indirect taxation, which under Ferdinand was applied to goods including salt, was a means of generating profits for the state without angering the wealthy, land-owning classes. Nonetheless, collective anger manifested itself in the Revolution of 1848, which saw the Emperor give up his throne. Upon hearing that revolutionaries were marching on his palace, Ferdinand is said to have asked, “But are they allowed to do that?”.



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