

# A HISTORY OF GAMES PLAYED WITH THE TAROT PACK THE GAME OF TRIUMPHS

VOLUME ONE

BY MICHAEL DUMMETT AND JOHN MCLEOD





PROFESSOR SIR MICHAEL DUMMETT, F.B.A., D.LITT. WAS AT CHRIST CHURCH OXFORD, 1947-1950, A FELLOW AT ALL SOULS' COLLEGE OXFORD FROM 1950-1979, AND PROFESSOR OF LOGIC AND FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD FROM 1979-1992. HE WON THE ROLF SCHOCK PRIZE IN 1995 AND WAS KNIGHTED IN 1999.



JOHN MCLEOD BEGAN HIS RESEARCH INTO CARD GAMES WHILE STUDYING MATHEMATICS IN CAMBRIDGE IN THE 1970S. HE IS THE CREATOR AND EDITOR OF [WWW.PAGAT.COM](http://WWW.PAGAT.COM), THE PRIMARY SOURCE ON THE INTERNET FOR CARD GAME INFORMATION. WRITING REGULARLY FOR *THE PLAYING CARD*, THE JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL PLAYING-CARD SOCIETY, HE HAS VISITED 10 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO LEARN THEIR NATIONAL TAROT GAMES. IN 2000, HE WAS AWARDED THE MODIANO PRIZE FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO PLAYING-CARD RESEARCH.

*Edmond Mellen*

DUMMETT/  
MCLEOD

A HISTORY OF GAMES PLAYED WITH THE TAROT PACK  
THE GAME OF TRIUMPHS

VOLUME  
ONE

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Alright, here is a rough scan of the entire book...

"A History of Games Played With the Tarot Pack: The Game of Triumphs: Volume One" by Michael Dummett and John McLeod.

...Looking online for books about Tarot, as a game (not fortune telling), in English was frustrating. Michael Dummett seems to be at the forefront of research in this area as far as English language documentation goes. Yet, many of Dummett's previous books or other books on the subject are out of print or overpriced when one can find a copy.

This book from Edwin Mellen Press is still in print but insanely expensive. The information contained within, however, is quite priceless and valuable, but as a poor college student... you have to be joking if you think I'll throw around that kind of money on one book! I'm sure many others out there are in the same boat.

Like I said though, I do value the work this author has done on a neglected and distorted aspect of history... and value the publisher for offering it... so...

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A History of Games Played with the Tarot Pack The Game of Triumphs Volume I  
Dummett, Michael, & McLeod, John  
Description

This two-volume book gives as comprehensive a history as can be achieved at the present time of a family of card games that originated in the first quarter of the XV century, and is therefore one of the very oldest still practiced. It is the family of games played with the Tarot pack. Contrary to popular belief, the Tarot pack was not invented for fortune-telling or any other occult purpose: that was an accretion dating from the late XVIII century. It was invented to play a new kind of card game: its great contribution was to introduce the idea of trumps into card play. The games spread to France and Switzerland in the early XVI century, and subsequently over almost the whole of Europe. In doing so, it developed a great multiplicity of different forms: the family is far more diverse than any other, while retaining a constant central core.

This book will gather material that is widely scattered and very hard to come by, a good deal of it not otherwise accessible in print at all. It will therefore be an indispensable reference work for all who are interested in the history of this game or any particular branch of it. It will also give examples, more instructive than could be given from any other family of card games, of how games evolve. Finally it will be of prime value to any who wish to play one or more forms of the game.

Reviews

"Pr. Sir Michael Dummett is the leading authority on the history of the Tarot and John McLeod maintains the reference Internet site on card games. They have produced an impressively thorough compendium of all the rules of the game of Tarot that are documented. Doing this, they offer all researchers interested in the subject a powerful tool for the history and spread of the game of tarot and thus a great lesson in cultural history. The rigorous structure of each chapter facilitates comparisons and offers a comprehensive sight of the subject. With its many appendices and indices it will soon be a reference book for all historians....I strongly recommend this book." - Thierry Depaulis

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**A HISTORY OF GAMES PLAYED  
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THE GAME OF TRIUMPHS**

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**Michael Dummett  
and  
John McLeod**

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*The cover illustration shows Tarocchi players in Bologna (see game 11.14 in this book).*

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### Volume One

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## Preface

A substantive work in English on games played with Tarot cards is something of a prodigy and deserving of explanation, not to say acclamation. For although Tarot games have been the staple recreation of millions of Europeans for nigh on six hundred years, the sorry fact remains that they have never taken root in either the English- or the Spanish-speaking worlds, and consequently missed the boat that might otherwise have brought them to the New World. Had it been otherwise, there can be no doubt that today's most widespread international card game would be not Contract Bridge but some other form of its ultimate ancestor, Tarot, more recognisably akin to forms still played across the breadth (if not the length) of Europe, from the Atlantic coast of France to the Carpathian strongholds of Romania.

But such is not the case, so an explanation is still required. Let it be, then, that this book repairs an injustice and demolishes a mountain of ignorance.

A survey of games literature in the western world will soon throw up three peculiarities as regrettable as they are remarkable. The first is how little gold is to be found among the dross of verbiage. Mental games, as distinct from physical sports, have until the very recent past rarely been accorded the study they deserve, despite their potential riches for such academic disciplines as anthropology, ethnology and social history. Culin's late 19th century studies of the games of the North American Indians and of Asia, and Murray's histories of Chess (1913) and 'other' board games (1952), stand as beacons in this dark of ignorance. With these and few other notable exceptions the majority of books on games are merely self-derivative collections of rules passed on to succeeding generations by a



## Acknowledgements

We owe an enormous debt to all those many people who have so graciously played with one or other of us some form of Tarot with which they are familiar, and have thereby introduced us to that form and helped us to understand its rules. Unfortunately they are too numerous for us to be able to list them all individually; we hope they will be assured that we feel deep gratitude towards them all.

We are also grateful to those who have helped us by sharing their research with us or advising us where to go to find out what we needed to know. Foremost among these is Dott. Lorenzo Cuppi, who has done marvellous work on the history of the Bolognese game of Tarocchino. We owe thanks also to Thierry Depaulis of Paris and to Dott. Umberto Faedi and Dott. Girolamo Zorli, both of Bologna. In Sicily we received great help from a number of people, most of them sadly no longer with us: above all, from the late Dott. Marcello Cimino, the late Avv. On. Gaetano Franchina of Tortorici and the late Prof. Gaetano Falzone, director of the Pitré Museum in Palermo; we cannot leave unmentioned the members of the Circolo 15 maggio at Calatafimi. Dr Robert Sedlaczek of Vienna has generously shared the results of his research with us, and introduced us to players of Tarock variations in many parts of Austria. In Hungary, we were greatly helped by Áron Csathó, Zoltán Geróts, Balázs Hajnal and Gábor Révész of Budapest and Gyula Zsigri of Szeged, who patiently discussed the more advanced forms of Tarokk with us and provided valuable comments on our description of these games. We also owe thanks to David Temperley and Trevor Denning, both of Birmingham, for great help with the illustrations, and to Nick Wedd of Oxford for preparing the maps for Appendix D.

process of indiscriminate and thinly disguised rewriting. A doctorate in philosophy awaits the first researcher to explore the sociological pathways by which western society has come to regard games as trivial pursuits, worthy of adult interest only to the extent that money can be earned by professional practitioners or won by the notoriously fortunate.

A second is that card games in particular tend to be treated as pursuits inferior to those of abstract board games such as Chess, Go and Draughts (Checkers). The charge may justly be applied to mindless gambling games like Faro and Baccarat, but of intelligent games like Bridge and Skat, not to mention Tarot, it is a calumny. The misrepresentation has not been helped – if indeed it has not been caused – by the conventional categorisation of board games as games of ‘perfect’ information as opposed to the technically ‘imperfect’ information of card games. Though meaning nothing more than ‘incomplete’, the word ‘imperfect’ casts an unjustly pejorative semantic shadow.

The term ‘perfect information’ is applied to Chess (etc.) because both players start from equal and known positions, remain fully cognizant of all ensuing positions, and can devise strategies free from the unpredictability of future events such as the roll of dice. It is the factor of future unpredictability that classifies dice games such as Backgammon as being of ‘imperfect’ information. But card games, like Chess and unlike Backgammon, are equally free of random future events. They are (carelessly) dismissed as being of imperfect information only in that players start from unequal and unknown positions created by the random distribution of resources (the shuffle and deal) and by the fact that cards are designed to be so held as to conceal their individual values. Unknown the opening position may be in Bridge, Tarot, and the like, but subsequent positions are determined not by chance events, as at Backgammon, but by the application of strategic and tactical skill, as at Chess. Intelligent card games are therefore not so much games of incomplete information as games of *developing* information: they are essentially games of and about the very topic of information. In bidding

games such as Bridge, Skat and Tarot a significant amount of information is released by the process of bidding itself. Further information is acquired by observing the subsequent fall of cards, testing hypotheses as to their distribution, deducing or inferring the holdings from which they are made, and doing so in sufficient time to play the rest of one's hand to best advantage. Tarot games carry the principle a stage further, in that many permit the exchange of additional information by verbal or visual conventions. Incomplete or imperfect information is therefore not the weakness but the *raison d'être* of all intelligent card games: the overcoming of ignorance constitutes their very substance.

A third peculiarity, by way of extension to the misperception of the nature of card games in general, is how widespread is the blanket of darkness enveloping everything to do with Tarots in particular. Most, indeed, are unaware of their very existence as games. The average person in the western street thinks of Tarots (if at all) only as the instruments of supposed fortune-telling. The ignorance is largely fostered and reinforced by writers of books on the mystic side of tarot who assert without evidence that tarot cards were originally invented for fortune-telling and only subsequently adapted to the 'less serious' business of gaming – whereas, as our authors patiently explain, the fact of the matter is precisely the reverse.

As an authoritative and convincing corrective to these cultural deficiencies this book could not have found authors more qualified for the task.

Professor Sir Michael Dummett is a founding member of the International Playing-Card Society and the author of the only hitherto existing English-language study of tarot games. Indeed, *The Game of Tarot* (London, 1980) is more than its title promises, for its introductory chapters contain as much original and thoroughly researched material on the history of card games in general as would have made a book in its own right. John McLeod, an equally active and long-standing member of the IPCS, is the founder and webmaster of the award-winning website entitled Rules of Card Games <<http://www.pagat.com>>, which



also contains more than its title suggests, as readers must be left to discover for their own delight.

Perhaps more remarkable than the academic prowess and integrity of the authors is the fact that their researches are rooted in the real-life field no less than in their personal enthusiasm for the subject. Both have visited many of the countries where Tarot games are current and have played them with everyday practitioners from all walks of life, and are, perhaps not surprisingly, themselves fiendishly accomplished players (I speak from bitter experience) of many of the games described herein.

The western world is welcome to its received belief in the inherent superiority of Contract Bridge over all other forms of pasteboard endeavour; but our authors will assert, and I will by no means dispute, that as soon as you start playing games of the Tarot family you will find them opening up a whole new dimension of those deductive and strategic skills that are the essence of all superior card games.

David Parlett

London, May 2003

## Introduction

This book contains the rules of play, so far as we have been able to discover them by this date (2003), of all members of the greatest of all families of card games: those played with different versions of the Tarot pack. As explained in Chapter 1, these have nothing whatever to do with fortune-telling or the occult: they are card games in the ordinary sense, but played with a special pack of cards. The family of Tarot games is the greatest in many respects. It is very old, extending from the early XV century to the present. It has been very widespread, being played, in one form or another, and at one time or another, in almost every European country, from Sicily to Sweden and from Belgium to Russia: the only countries in which it has never taken root are those of the Iberian peninsula and of the British isles, and those formerly under Ottoman domination. It is enormously varied: not only the number of different games belonging to the family, but the extent of their variation, is extraordinary. It has contributed decisively to the development of card play; from it derives the very idea of trumps in a trick-taking game, an idea rapidly incorporated into many other card games and, in particular, into the ancestor of Whist and thereby of Bridge. But above all we believe that it is the greatest family of card games in the most important respect: it is a family of great card games. Among them are games most imaginatively and delicately devised, demanding the most acute strategic skill: more interesting and more testing than Bridge, wrongly proclaimed by its devotees to be the best card game ever invented.

The present book is an offshoot from Michael Dummett's *The Game of Tarot: from Ferrara to Salt Lake City*, published by Gerald Duckworth of

London in 1980. That book was principally devoted to the same purpose as the present book, although many games included in this one were then unknown to its author. But it covered much else besides. It surveyed the history of other card games, such as Poker and Rummy, and described in detail games related to the Tarot family: the historically fascinating game of Trappola, played with a regular 36-card Italian pack, of whose descendants much more is now known; and the game actually known as Tarock, being an adaptation of Tarot games to the regular 36-card German pack, and its relatives from Germany and the American West. It discussed the general history of playing cards, and the relation of those of the East to those of Europe. It established for the first time the history of Tarot cards, as opposed to the games played with them, within Italy and outside. And it gave a fairly detailed account of the origins of Tarot occultism and its development up to about 1920, an accretion dating from the late XVIII century. All this is missing from the present book, which is a dedicated history of Tarot games, in the sense in which the word “dedicated” is used by computer enthusiasts; but it is greatly expanded from the corresponding chapters of *The Game of Tarot*, because so much more has come to be known since 1980.

Those interested in the other matters discussed in *The Game of Tarot* can consult other works. For Tarot occultism, *A Wicked Pack of Cards* (Duckworth, London, 1996) by Ronald Decker, Thierry Depaulis and Michael Dummett, and its successor, *A History of the Occult Tarot 1870-1970*, issued by the same publisher in 2002, by Ronald Decker and Michael Dummett. For the history of card games in general, David Parlett's *The Oxford Guide to Card Games* (Oxford University Press, 1990). For the history of Trappola games, *Trappola* (Piatnik, Vienna, 1988) by Robert S. Kissel and Michael Dummett, or the monograph – much shorter than this book – that we hope that someone is going to write. And those who can read Italian and want to know the history of Tarot cards designed for play can consult Michael Dummett's still very largely up to date *Il Mondo e l'Angelo* (Bibliopolis, Naples, 1993); or, for those who can read

French, the less comprehensive and not quite so up to date *Tarot, jeu et magie*, the catalogue, edited by Thierry Depaulis, of the great exhibition of Tarot cards at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris in 1984. For anything else, they can look at a copy of *The Game of Tarot* in one of the libraries.

Publisher and author of *The Game of Tarot* quickly learned what a danger had lain in the inclusion of the word "Tarot" in the title: almost everyone assumed the book to be about the occult. Even in a shop specialising in material for games of all kinds, the book was found in the section on the occult, where no card-game enthusiast would ever see it and all devotees of the occult would hastily return it to the shelf. For this reason it sold badly, and Duckworth's quickly allowed it to go out of print. In this book the work resulting in that book of twenty-two years ago is salvaged and supplemented. The information is hard to come by: it derives from numerous diverse card-game books, very long out of print, and from individuals who still play different forms of the game in a variety of countries. It had been gathered with much care and labour; if not preserved, it would be irretrievably dispersed. But the book published two decades hence was in need of updating: very much had been discovered which was then unknown to any researcher. In the last twenty years, John McLeod has carried out much research into the modes of play of many card games, and particularly Tarot games. He has enthusiastically co-operated with the author of the original book to bring its account of games of the Tarot family as much up to date as possible. The two of us hope that the new book will stand as a definitive account of what it has been possible to discover concerning this great family of card games by the end of the second millennium. It will not remain a comprehensive account indefinitely: new discoveries are made all the time in this area, and games still played will undergo further evolution. We are conscious of gaps in our knowledge that we should dearly like to be filled: the XVII- and XVIII-century Tarot game peculiar to the city of Lucca, played with a pack containing only the twelve highest trumps; and the mysterious Tarot à 73 cartes, played in some

French-speaking region with a pack of Austrian type and manufacture with 40 instead of 21 numbered trumps. We hope that whoever discovers the rules of these or other currently unknown Tarot games will allow the present publishers, the Edwin Mellen Press, and that the Mellen Press will agree, to issue supplements to the present work giving the rules of those games and other information about them. Meanwhile, we intend to publish any information we acquire about Tarot games or variations that were not known to us at the time of writing this book on a web site <http://www.tarotgame.org> which we have set up for that purpose.

Tarot games are of course played by both men and women. We have tried to use gender-inclusive language where practical, but when necessary in the interests of clarity and conciseness, we have resorted to the traditional use of the male forms “he”, “his”, etc. to refer to people of either sex.

Michael Dummett

John McLeod

Oxford and London, February 2003

# CHAPTER 1

## The Game of Tarot

This chapter is essential reading for all that comes after: please study it with care, since it gives the fundamental features of all the games to be described in subsequent chapters, which will be assumed in those chapters without restatement, and the terminology to be used, the explanation of which will not be repeated.

### The Tarot pack

Many people have heard of Tarot cards: ninety-nine out of a hundred of them believe that they were invented for fortune-telling or as a document of the occult. The belief is entirely wrong. The Tarot pack was invented in northern Italy in about 1425; the earliest documentary references to it come from the court of Ferrara in 1442, and the earliest surviving pack was made for the court of Milan, conjecturally in 1441. By the end of the century it was known throughout northern Italy, from Rome upwards; in the early XVI century it spread to France and Switzerland. A plethora of references to the cards, from Italy in the XV century and from all three countries in the XVI and XVII, testify to their use as instruments in a special kind of card game. None associates them with the occult, and only one very dubious one hints at a use of them to read individual characters<sup>1</sup>. It was not until the XVIII century that the use of them for divination

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<sup>1</sup> This occurs in the bizarre work *Il Caos dell Triperuno* by Merlin Cocai (pseudonym of Teofilo Folengo, 1491-1544) published in Venice in 1527. Dividing a set of trump cards between four people, the character Limerno composes four sonnets each referring to the subjects of the cards allotted to one of the four persons and describing his or her character.

became widespread in Bologna and in France. Their association with the occult originated exclusively in France; neither it nor their use for fortune-telling was propagated in print until 1781. For a further hundred years the occult Tarot flourished only in France; together with Tarot divination, it then spread to Britain, and, in the XX century, to Germany and the United States and eventually to every Western country.

The word *tarot*, often spelled *tarau* in early sources, is the French version of the Italian term *tarocco* (plural *tarocchi*); the German version is *Tarock* (all languages but French retain the guttural sound at the end). The word *tarocchi* did not come into use until the XVI century; in XV-century Italy the game was known as *Trionfi* and the Tarot pack as *carte da trionfi* (cards with trumps). Thierry Depaulis has made a strong case for the conjecture that the Italian word *tarocco* was derived from the French word *tarot* or *tarau*, rather than conversely. We should speak of the invention of the Tarot *pack*, not of Tarot *cards*; for the pack was invented by adding special cards to the ordinary Italian pack as it existed at that time: many features often thought to be special to the Tarot pack are shared with ordinary Italian playing-card packs. These include the suits of Swords, Batons, Cups and *Denari* or Coins, still used in most ordinary present-day Italian packs, and the court figures of King, Knight (in Italian *Cavallo* = Horse) and Jack (in Italian *Fante*); in the Tarot pack, the Queen, ranking just below the King, was added to the court, decades before she became one of the court figures of packs using the then new French suit-signs of Spades, Clubs, Hearts and Diamonds. We shall use the letters K, Q, C, J and A to denote the court cards and Aces of the Tarot pack, and the letters S, B, C and D to denote the Italian suits. The special features of the Tarot pack are a sequence of 21 picture cards called *trionfi*, not belonging to any suit, and a singular card, the Fool or *Matto*. With the 14 cards of each of the four suits, these make up a pack of 78 cards. The 21 *trionfi* are ranked among themselves, and usually numbered to indicate that ranking. They depict a series of standard subjects – the Pope, Love, Justice, the Devil, the Star

and so on; but for our purposes we can refer to them by number. There are three that we need to note especially: the two highest, the World and the Angel (sometimes called the Judgement), and the lowest, called the Bagatto (an Italian word with no other meaning).

From the word *trionfi* the English word “trumps” is derived (a corruption of “triumphs”); and we shall henceforward refer to the 21 *trionfi* as **trumps**, for that is precisely what they are. The invention of the Tarot pack was the invention of the very idea of trumps: Tarot games are trick-taking games with a permanent set of trumps. The point of adding to the regular pack a sequence of cards of quite different structure and appearance was precisely that they should play an entirely new role in the game. That was the great contribution of the game of Tarot to card play. Hitherto trick-taking games had existed, probably introduced from the Islamic world in the XIV century together with playing cards themselves, but played without trumps. The idea of trumps seems to have been independently and simultaneously invented in Germany, for a peasant game called Karnöffel; but linguistic evidence shows that it was from Tarot that it spread to other card games. In the late XV and early XVI century a number of different trick-taking games played with ordinary packs appeared in various countries, including Italy, with names like “Triumph” after their principal new feature, triumphs or trumps, obviously borrowed from the game of Tarot; English Triumph was the ancestor of Whist. Karnöffel used a quite different term for ‘trump’. In these Triumph games, one of the ordinary four suits was designated as trumps, avoiding the need for the extra cards in the Tarot pack. In the new games, the trump suit typically varied according to the turn of a card in the deal, even though there was no advantage at the time in having a varying suit as the trump suit, for bidding had not yet been invented.

### **Trick-taking play: order of the cards**

In most Tarot games the cards are dealt out anti-clockwise, the player to the dealer's right receiving the first cards; this will be assumed unless noted. When



the deal is clockwise, the player to the dealer's left receives the first cards. The usual rules of trick-taking games are observed. The cards are played out in tricks. A trick consists of one card contributed by each of the players: one player **leads** to the trick (plays its first card face up to the table at his choice); each of the other players in rotation (in the same direction as the deal) then plays a card face up. Most often the lead to the first trick is made by the player to the right of the dealer, when deal and play are anti-clockwise, and the one to his left when they are clockwise; when there are declarations or announcements to be made before play begins, these are opened by the same player. Again, these conventions will be assumed; only exceptions will be noted. In Tarot games each player must follow suit if he can (play a card of the same suit as that led), including playing a trump if a trump was led. However, unlike the rule in Whist or Bridge, a player who cannot follow suit *must* play a trump if he has one, even if he cannot win the trick with it; if he can neither follow suit nor play a trump, he may play any card. These will be called the **usual rules of play**. The trick is won by whoever played the highest trump or, if no trump was played, the highest card of the suit led. The winner of the trick places the cards of that trick face down beside him on the table and leads to the next trick. If there are partnerships and it is known to all which players are partners, each team may keep their tricks in a single pile. Higher-numbered trump cards beat lower-numbered ones. In the four plain suits, the **original ranking** is as follows: in Swords and Batons the cards rank, in descending order, K, Q, C, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, A, but in Cups and Coins they rank K, Q, C, J, A, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. This peculiarity has been followed in all Tarot games save those played in France and Sicily, where the order in all four suits is the same as that in Swords and Batons. We shall assume this original ranking unless we state otherwise: "**10s always follow Js**" will signify the simplified French and Sicilian ranking.

A **hand** is of course the set of cards that, at any time, some one player holds in his hand and that belong to him and are available to him to play. When

all the players' hands have been played out in tricks, the scores are reckoned up, the cards shuffled and cut, and the next player in rotation from the previous dealer deals them out. We shall also use the term **hand** for all that takes place between one deal and the next. By a **round** will be meant a series of hands in which each player has dealt just once. A **rubber** is a sequence of hands sufficient to determine the eventual winner or winners and to settle the final score; but in some games the score is reckoned for each hand, without the need to group them into rubbers. The term **rubber** is borrowed from other card games, and is not used by Tarot players; but it is a convenient term in setting out rules. A **session** may consist of several rubbers or many hands: it is simply what occupies the interval between the players' sitting down together at the card table and their dispersing.

### **Use of the Fool**

The original principle governing the play of the Fool or *Matto* was that the player who has it can, just once, escape an unfortunate effect of the rules of play by playing that card at a suitable moment. By doing so, he is excused from having either to follow suit or to play a trump to the trick in question: he may thus save an important card that would otherwise be captured.

Many Tarot games continue to follow this original principle. In them, the Fool has no power to win a trick, but the one who plays it does not, save in special circumstances, lose it: he takes it back and places it face down among the cards he or his partner has won in tricks. (The point of this procedure is that it is of value to have the Fool among the cards one has won in tricks, as will be explained.) In some such games he gives to the winner of the trick a card of his choice from among those he has already won to make up the number of cards in that trick; in others he is not required to do this. When the Fool is used according to this original principle, we shall say that "**the Fool serves as Excuse**"; we shall add "**with exchange**" or "**without exchange**" to show whether or not it is necessary to give a card in exchange. The circumstances in which the Fool may be lost are these. It is lost to the player or side winning the trick to which it was

played if the player or side that held it wins no tricks at all. If that player or side has won no tricks by the moment at which the Fool is played, it is placed face up on the table, and surrendered if no tricks are subsequently won; if a trick is subsequently won, it is added to that trick and a card given in exchange if this is the general rule. In many games, the Fool is also lost if it is played to the last trick, or to one of the last few tricks; this rule varies from game to game.

### **New role of the Fool**

When the Fool serves as Excuse, the highest trump is most usually numbered XXI (or 21) and the lowest trump I (or 1); we shall often refer to the trump I as the **Bagatto** or the **Pagat**. In the XVIII century, a new type of game started to become popular. In such games, the Fool, usually known as the *Sküs* (a corruption of *Excuse*) or some variant, lost its ancient role and became simply the highest trump, beating the XXI and functioning in effect as the XXII; in this case it obeyed all rules applying to trumps in general. For games of this type we shall say that **“the Fool (Sküs) is the highest trump”**.

### **How points are counted**

In some Tarot games, each player plays and scores for himself: in this case we say **“Each plays for himself”**. In other games, the players are divided into two teams or **sides**; players belonging to the same side are each others' partners. The object of a Tarot game is never defined by the number of tricks won, but by the points on the cards won in tricks (often together with points gained in other ways); different cards have different point-values. The original way of counting points on the cards won in tricks by a player or side was to count 1 point for each trick won (including the dealer's discard – see below), together with extra points for certain cards; this method was retained in a very few later games, and will be called **the original method**. In the four suits, the **counting cards**, i.e. those with high point-values, are (almost) always the court cards: under the original method of counting, they have the values: K 4 points, Q 3 points, C 2 points and J 1 point.

There is some variation in the selection of other cards to which high point-values are assigned; the most frequent choice consists of trump XXI, trump I and, whether it serves as Excuse or is the highest trump, the Fool or Sküs; hence the point of taking back the Fool when it serves as Excuse. Although the Fool is not, properly speaking, a trump when it serves as Excuse, we may call these three cards the **standard trump honours**, and the restriction of high point-values to them, together with the court cards, the **standard valuation**. Under the original method of computing point-totals, the usual assignment of point-values to the three standard trump honours is 4 points to each. A card without special point-value will be called an **empty card**. We shall call these point-values – 4 points for each of the standard trump honours, 4 points for each King, 3 for each Queen, 2 for each Knight, 1 for each Jack and 1 for each trick – the **original standard values**.

Suppose that all 78 cards are used, and that there are three players, so that there are three cards in each trick and hence 26 tricks in all. To the 26 points for tricks will be added 12 for the XXI, I and Fool, 16 for the Ks, 12 for the Qs, 8 for the Cs and 4 for the Js, making 78 points in all divided between the players. It is convenient to keep the cards won in tricks in a single pile, without separating them into tricks, and, at the end of play, to count them out in threes. It will never make a difference to the total how they are divided into threes, nor, in particular, whether or not the sets of three form the original tricks. When the cards are counted out in this way, a set of three containing a King and two empty cards may be counted as contributing 5 points (4 for the King and 1 for the trick).

This practice led in a natural way to the most usual way of counting points, often found confusing by beginners. According to this method, point-values one higher than those given above are assigned to each card: 5 points each to the Ks, XXI, I and Fool, 4 to the Qs, 3 to the Cs and 2 to the Js. It is important to note that this point-system applies whether the Fool serves as Excuse or is the highest trump. These will be called simply the **standard values**. When there are

three players, the cards are counted out in threes; as before, the point-total will come to the same however the cards won in tricks are divided into sets of three. A set of three cards containing one counting card and two empty cards will contribute as many points as the counting card is worth: e.g. a set consisting of the K, 7 and 4 of Batons will contribute 5 points. A set consisting of three empty cards, say trumps XIX, XV and II, will contribute 1 point. A set containing two counting cards will contribute 1 less than the sum of their values: e.g. the Q, C and 10 of Swords will contribute  $4 + 3 - 1 = 6$  points. One in which all three cards have high point-values will contribute 2 less than the sum of their values; QB, CB and trump I will contribute  $4 + 3 + 5 - 2 = 10$  points. (When the Fool serves as Excuse and it is not required to give a card in exchange for it, only 4 points are assigned to the Fool, but it is counted separately without needing to be accompanied by two other cards; the player or side with just two cards left over after counting out the cards in threes scores for those two as if, accompanied by one more empty card, they formed a set of three. The overall effect is therefore just the same.)

This method of computing the point-total could be more simply stated by assigning a point-value of 1 to each empty card, and making each set of three contribute 2 points less than the sum of the point-values; but it is seldom stated in this way. As remarked, the method is often found confusing on first explanation; but a moment's reflection shows that it is strictly equivalent to the original method, provided that the cards are counted in sets of three when there are three players, and of four or two when there are four or two players. Thus, when the original method is used, and there are four players, the cards will be counted in fours, and a set consisting of the K, C, 3 and 6 of Cups would score 4 points for the K, plus 2 for the C and 1 for the set or trick, making 7 in all; using standard values, this would be computed as  $5 + 3 - 1 = 7$ . With two players, the cards will be counted in twos, and a pair consisting of the K and C of Cups would score  $4 + 2 + 1 = 7$  under the original method, or  $5 + 3 - 1 = 7$  using the standard values.

However, the rationale for this method of computing the point-total with standard values was almost everywhere forgotten: it became the principle to count the cards in sets of a fixed number regardless of the number of cards in a trick. Thus they may be counted in threes, in accordance with the foregoing method, using the standard values, even though there are four players and hence four cards to a trick; that is to say, a set of three consisting of K, C and 6 of Cups would score  $5 + 3 - 1 = 7$  points, despite there being four players. In such a case, this method of computing the point-total is of course *not* equivalent to the original method. We shall indicate the means of computing the point-total, when it is done in this fashion, by saying that “**the cards are counted in threes (twos, fours)**”; this will assume the use of standard values. Appendix A is devoted to a comprehensive survey of methods of counting points.

The points thus calculated on the cards won in tricks always either determine who has won and who has lost the hand, or else, together with points obtained in other ways, go to determine that. But in many games, particularly those with bidding, these point-values do not constitute the score of each player or side: that is computed differently. We therefore need a distinction between points of the kind that determine win or loss and those that are used to indicate what each player or side has scored to date. The word **points** by itself will always mean the former; when especial clarity is needed, they will be called **card points**. The points used to register the score will be called **game points**.

In many games, players may claim a bonus in game points for special combinations of cards they hold in their hands; the claim is usually, though not always, made before play begins. Such a claim is called a **declaration**. To be distinguished from declarations are **announcements**, likewise made before play begins. These state a player's intention, with the help of his partner if he has one, to carry out a certain feat in play, such as capturing all four Kings; if successful, this earns a **bonus**, and if unsuccessful, it incurs a **penalty**.

### **Suit systems**

When in the early XVI century the game of Tarot spread to France and Switzerland, it took with it the Italian form of pack, by then strange to card players of those countries. It later spread to Germany and eventually to every European country save the British isles, the Iberian peninsula and the lands under Ottoman rule, still carrying the Italian Tarot pack with it. It is worth noting that, for ordinary playing cards, the suit-signs of Swords, Batons, Cups and Coins have three different forms: Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. In the Italian form, used in most Tarot packs with these suits, the Swords are curved and they and the Batons extend on the numeral cards from top to bottom of the card, intersecting one another. On 'Portuguese' and Spanish cards, the Swords are straight; on Portuguese ones they are arranged diagonally and still intersect, but on Spanish ones they are upright and separate from one another. Spanish Kings are standing, Italian and Portuguese ones are seated. In Portuguese packs the lowest court figure in each suit is female, and the Aces have dragons on them. Although the Portuguese type was formerly the national form of playing-card pack in Portugal, it was of Spanish origin and continued to be manufactured in Spain for export. During the XVII century, it was used for ordinary playing cards in Rome and the Papal states, in the Kingdom of Naples and in Sicily, and for Tarot packs in Rome and Sicily; it has continued to be used for Tarot packs in Sicily to this day. The Spanish form has been used for ordinary playing cards in most of Italy from the XVIII century to the present day, the indigenous Italian type surviving only in northern cities such as Venice, Trent and Brescia; but only a single Tarot pack, intended for Sardinia, is known in which the Spanish type was used.

An important change occurred in about 1740, when a new type of Tarot pack was invented, in which, although the four court figures remained as before, the French suit-signs of Spades, Clubs, Hearts and Diamonds (which we abbreviate as S, C, H, D or indicate by ♠, ♣, ♥ and ♦) replaced the traditional Italian suits. For purposes of card order, the black suits S and C were equated

with Swords and Batons, so that in those suits the 10s followed the Js and the As were the lowest cards, while the red suits H and D were equated with Cups and Coins, with the As following the Js and the 10s the lowest cards. At the same time, the traditional subjects of the trump cards were abandoned in favour of animals or scenes of daily life; the trumps were henceforward identified solely by the large Roman or Arabic numerals they displayed. The Fool or Sküs became an entertainer. This change affected the rules of the game in no way whatever. The new form of Tarot pack battled it out with the traditional form over the next half-century, but by 1800 had become completely victorious everywhere but in France, Switzerland and Italy. French Tarot players went over to the new 'German' form, with French suit-signs, in about 1900, leaving only Italy and the German- and Romansch-speaking parts of Switzerland faithful to the Italian type of pack.

### **Talon and discard**

In almost all Tarot games, before actual play starts one or more of the players obtains from one to six extra cards, additional to the number he will hold during play. During the deal, the extra cards may simply be given to one of the players, or they may be placed face down on the table, forming the **talon**, later to be distributed between the players or left to the end of play. Each player receiving extra cards must discard face down, without showing them to the other players, an equal number of cards from among those in the hand after adding the extra cards; these form that player's **discard**, which may, but need not, contain one or more of the extra cards. The discarded cards will count to the player or to one of the sides (usually, but not always, that player's side) at the end of play, exactly as if they had been won in tricks. There are usually restrictions on which cards may be discarded. Typically, cards of highest point-value may not be discarded, that is, Kings, the XXI, the I and the Fool or Sküs. The precise restrictions will be stated for each game or group of games.



### **Shortened packs**

Many games are played with the full 78-card Tarot pack; but for many others the pack is shortened by the removal of certain of the numeral cards of the four suits, thus increasing the ratio of trump cards to suit cards. There are many different ways of doing this, to be noted in due course; but the commonest is to shorten the full 78-card pack, either Italian-suited or, more often, French-suited, to 54 cards. This is done by removing the cards from Ace to 6 in each of the suits of Swords and Batons, or of Spades and Clubs, and from 5 to 10 in each of Cups and Coins, or of Hearts and Diamonds: that is to say, the six lowest-ranking cards of each suit. The specification "**54-card pack**" will always signify a pack shortened in this way; other methods of shortening the pack will be described explicitly. In Minchiate games, the pack is expanded to 97 cards by increasing the number of trumps from 21 to 40 – a different way of increasing the proportion of trump cards.

### **Bidding**

It may seem, from this preliminary statement of rules common to all Tarot games, that there is little room for variation between them, save over whether the Fool serves as Excuse or is the highest trump. This would be a bad mistake: it will be seen from later chapters how wide a range of variation has been developed within the common framework. Many Tarot games incorporate bidding, as a preliminary to play, in order to determine temporary partnerships between the players. This was not an original feature of Tarot. It was borrowed from the Spanish three-handed game of Ombre and its four- and five-handed adaptations Quadrille and Cinquille. It was Ombre which first introduced the practice of bidding into card play. It spread from Spain to France, Italy, England and Germany in about 1660, and quickly became as fashionable among card games as Bridge is now, though it was subsequently superseded by Quadrille; this pair of games remained dominant until the end of the XVIII century. Bidding in Ombre and Quadrille did not, as in Bridge, affect the objective of the declarer, which

remained always the same once actual play began: it affected only the conditions under which he undertook to achieve it – whether he could name trumps, whether he could exchange cards before play, and, in *Quadrille*, whether or not he had a partner. Bidding, in the forms practised in *Ombre* and *Quadrille*, was rapidly adopted by many trick-taking games, including a multitude of Tarot games. Appendix B surveys the different mechanisms of bidding.

### **The history of the games**

None of the games described in the subsequent chapters is a reconstruction or conjectural: all are based either on printed descriptions or oral ones given by actual players, or else on our own eye-witness observation. We have therefore been unable to describe games from a date before anyone began to write down the rules of card games; this was first done in the XVI century, but it did not become common until the subsequent one. The detailed earliest history of Tarot games is in any case beyond anyone's reach; indeed, some of the later history is irrecoverably lost. It is evident from literary references that different games played with the Tarot pack were already developed in XV- and XVI-century Italy; but the allusions are too sketchy for it to be possible to reconstruct the games. Nevertheless, some later history can be discovered, and will be given here: some of the games described were intermediate stages in the evolution of those now played, and are of interest in themselves and also as explaining how the modern games acquired the features that they have, and as illustrating how card games evolve.

Moreover, it is possible to deduce, in broad outline, the history of Tarot games in the first two centuries of their existence; not, indeed, the specific rules of play, but their spread from one region to another. In Italy, the principal clue is the order of the trump cards. By 1450 the selection of subjects depicted on the trumps was everywhere the same; but their order varied considerably, which was possible because at first the trumps were not numbered, but distinguished only by subject. It is chiefly from this that we can infer the direction in which the game

spread. There appear to have been three great initial centres of the game: Milan, Ferrara and Bologna. It may have been invented in the first, spread quickly to the second and from there to the last. Each of these had its own characteristic trump order; these differed principally over which was the highest trump, and where the three virtues – Justice, Temperance and Fortitude – were inserted into the series. In the Bolognese order, the Angel is the highest trump, followed by the World; the three virtues have low consecutive positions. The Ferrarese took the World as the highest trump, followed by Justice and only then by the Angel; the other two virtues had much lower but not adjacent positions. In the Milanese pack, the World was again the highest trump, followed immediately by the Angel; the highest of the virtues was Temperance, oddly placed between Death and the Devil, with the other two in lower but not adjacent places. The Ferrarese initiated the practice of numbering the trumps before the end of the XV century, and the Milanese took to it in the early XVI century. But in Bologna the practice was not adopted until the later XVIII century: the first detailed descriptions of the game played there, from the middle of that century, make plain that a player had to commit the order of the trumps to memory.

In Ferrara the game was immensely popular until the end of the XVI century, when the d'Este family was deprived by the Papacy of its sovereignty and moved to Modena; there is no sign of the game's having retained its popularity there. From Ferrara it spread to Venice and to Trent, in neither of which did it greatly flourish; soon after 1600 the Ferrarese tradition was defunct. In Bologna the game has kept its popularity until this day, in the very special form that it developed in that city. From Bologna it quickly spread to Florence, which, by its invention of the game of Minchiate, played with a pack of 97 cards, became a fourth centre. From Florence, the game spread to Rome, both in its original 78-card form and in the 97-card form of Minchiate. From Rome both forms spread in the XVII century to Sicily. Florence and Rome lost interest in either around 1900; the game of Minchiate finally expired in the 1930s in its last home, Genoa.

Called Gallerini in Sicily, Minchiate died out there in the XVIII century; but Tarot games with a shortened Tarot pack still survive in a few parts of the island.

It was principally from Milan that Tarot was disseminated to the rest of Europe. During the French wars for that city in the first quarter of the XVI century, in which the Swiss were also involved, it spread to both Switzerland and France, where it gained enormous popularity. It is still played in Switzerland, and is at present enjoying a great revival in France; but it died out in Lombardy during the XIX century. By the XVIII century the game had spread from France, Switzerland and Italy to Germany and most of Europe by routes that are difficult to establish. As it spread, it developed ever newer variations.

Piedmont-Savoy is the only region of Italy giving signs of the influence of more than one of the three traditions. Tarot was known there already in the XV century, but appears to have been brought there, not from Lombardy but from Bologna. Features of play persisting to this day derive from the Bolognese game, while the trump order, although basically Milanese in type, differed by having the Angel as the highest trump. Piedmont is probably the region of Italy where the game of Tarot currently enjoys the greatest popularity.

It is a law of playing-card history that cards normally used for play always conform to some standard design or pattern. Such a standard pattern may be used throughout some one country, or may be confined to some region within it, as continues to be the case in Italy and Germany. In Italy, the same standard designs were ordinarily used for the regular pack and for the same cards in the Tarot pack, since for Italians a Tarot pack was simply a regular pack with a number of additional cards. Outside Italy, on the other hand, the Tarot pack with Italian suits had no cards in common with the regular pack, but was altogether exotic; there were nevertheless standard patterns for the Tarot pack. The principal French standard pattern for the Italian-suited Tarot pack, the celebrated Tarot de Marseille, is a manifest descendant of the Milanese pattern; and from it the patterns used for Italian-suited Tarot cards in all but one of the countries of

Europe outside Italy derive. The exception is what is now Belgium, where a quite different Italian-suited Tarot pattern was used, and this had as ancestor an alternative pattern also used in France. It can only have come from Italy: is it a descendant of the kind of Tarot pack used in Savoy in years before 1700? This seems very likely, but we cannot tell, since no cards of that date have survived from Savoy or Piedmont.

Directions of influence and of spread are interesting; but we can establish little more for the very early life of the Tarot family of games. More interesting is the evolution of the various forms of the game; this will be studied in what follows. We are concerned with the *family* of Tarot games, but will not describe games adapted from Tarot but played with ordinary packs. A handful of games played with Tarot packs but not belonging to the family are briefly summarised in Appendix C. The following chapters are divided into three Parts. Those in Part I describe games in which the Fool serves as Excuse and the standard valuation is employed. Part II deals with Italian games which do not respect the standard valuation, although the Fool still serves as Excuse. Part III comprises the newer type of game in which the Fool is the highest trump, but the standard valuation applies.

# PART I

## CHAPTER 2

### The Early Stages of the Game in France and Switzerland

The game of Tarot spread to France and Switzerland in the early XVI century, as a result of the French wars in Italy from 1494 to 1522; Milan was under French occupation from 1499 to 1522, save from 1512 to 1515, when the Swiss, who had been heavily involved, were defeated by the French at Marignano. A document of 1505 discovered by Hyacinthe Chobaut testifies to the presence in Avignon at that date of a cardmaker, one Jean Fort, who was making Tarot packs, among others.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of this document Thierry Depaulis has put forward strong arguments for the hypothesis that the word *tarot* or *tarau* is French in origin, and that the Italian word *tarocco* was derived from it.<sup>2</sup> A great many references to the

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<sup>1</sup> In Chobaut's book, *Les Maîtres Cartiers d'Avignon du Xv<sup>ème</sup> siècle à la Révolution* (Vaison-la-Romaine, 1955), p. 25, the date is erroneously given as 1507, perhaps by a printer's error. The true date was discovered by Mme Esther Moench, curator of the Musée du Petit-Palais d'Avignon, at the instigation of Thierry Depaulis; see the latter's article 'Des "cartes familièrement appelées *tarau*"' ('On the "cards popularly called *tarau*"'), forthcoming in *The Playing Card* (journal of the International Playing-Card Society), in which the relevant passages in the document are given. One of them refers (in Latin) to 'cards called in the vernacular *tarau*' as being made in Avignon. Regarding *tarau* as a French rather than Provençal word, Depaulis considers that it is likely to have originated in Lyons, and hence that Tarot cards were also made there at this time.

<sup>2</sup> As noted in Chapter 1, the word used in XV-century Italy for Tarot cards was *trionfi*; as late as 1500 a Latin statute of Reggio nell'Emilia, of which the d'Este family held the dukedom, allowed the playing of *triumphos cum chartis*. The earliest known occurrences of the word *tarocchi* in Italy are in entries in an account-book of the Ferrarese court for June and December 1505 – the very year in which the French word *tarau* first appears in the document cited in note 1 (for this reference see G. Ortalli, 'The Prince and the playing cards', *Ludica*, vol. 2, 1996, pp. 175-205 at p.190; Dr Ortalli has confirmed in writing that in both entries the word used is *tarochi* [sic]). Statutes of the town of Crema, south-east of Milan, in 1483 declared lawful playing at *triumphos*; in a revision of 1534 this had become *triumphos et tarochum* (H. Bosshard, 'Nomi di giuochi di fortuna ... negli statuti lombardi ...', *Sache, Ort und Wort*, Geneva & Zurich, 1943, pp. 438-9). Depaulis's hypothesis would imply that the game spread to all other countries, including

game are to be found in XVI-century French literature, beginning with Rabelais in 1534. In a court case, the game was mentioned as having been played by some noblemen in Grenoble in 1579. It was played by Louis XIII at Bordeaux in 1615.

In the Tarot de Marseille, the most usual French pattern for Italian-suited Tarot cards, derived from that of Milan, the subjects of the trumps were as follows:

|       |   |      |   |
|-------|---|------|---|
| XXI   | <i>le Monde</i> (the World)                             | X    | <i>la Roue de Fortune</i><br>(the Wheel of Fortune) |
| XX    | <i>le Jugement</i> (the Judgment)                       | VIII | <i>l'Hermit</i> (the Hermit)                        |
| XVIII | <i>le Soleil</i> (the Sun)                              | VIII | <i>la Justice</i> (Justice)                         |
| XVIII | <i>la Lune</i> (the Sun)                                | VII  | <i>le Chariot</i> (the Chariot)                     |
| XVII  | <i>l'Étoile</i> (the Star)                              | VI   | <i>l'Amoureux</i> (the Lover)                       |
| XVI   | <i>la Maison Dieu</i><br>(the House of God = the Tower) | V    | <i>le Pape</i> (the Pope)                           |
| XV    | <i>le Diable</i> (the Devil)                            | III  | <i>l'Empereur</i> (the Emperor)                     |
| XIII  | <i>Tempérance</i> (Temperance)                          | III  | <i>l'Impératrice</i> (the Empress)                  |
| XIII  | <i>la Mort</i> (Death)                                  | II   | <i>la Papesse</i> (the Popess)                      |
| XII   | <i>le Pendu</i> (the Hanged Man)                        | I    | <i>le Bateleur</i> (the Mountebank)                 |
| XI    | <i>la Force</i> (Strength)                              |      | <i>le Mat</i> (the Fool)                            |

The earliest French account of the game is given in a short pamphlet, *Règle du Jeu des Tarots* (RT), printed at Nevers, probably in 1637, whose author has recently been identified by Thierry Depaulis (who discovered the pamphlet) as the abbé Michel de Marolles (1600-1681).<sup>3</sup> He had composed it at the request of the Princess Louise-Marie de Gonzague-Nevers (1611-1667), with whom he played the game at Nevers in 1637, as he records in his *Mémoires*, published in Paris in 1656; she became Queen of Poland in 1645. It is accompanied in the manuscript department of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, by a manuscript summary of the rules, ascribed by Depaulis to Augustin Dupuy (1581-1641). In

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Switzerland, directly or indirectly from Italy rather than via France, since they all ended their form of the word 'tarot' with a guttural, indicating a derivation from the Italian. However, the use in all European countries save what is now Belgium of the French inscriptions on the trumps and court cards and of the Tarot de Marseille trump order and designs for the trumps (other than II and V) shows that there was strong French influence, as do the French terms used by players of Tarock in Germany (the word *Sküs* is of course a corruption of French *Excuse*).

<sup>3</sup> T. Depaulis, 'Quand l'abbé de Marolles jouait au tarot', *Le Vieux Papier*, Fascicule 65, July 2002, pp. 313-26.

1622 François Garasse had written that the game of Tarot was more popular in France than chess. The description is evidently of a standard form of the game, since it tallies very well with that given by de Gébelin in 1781, as described in Chapter 3. As Thierry Depaulis has pointed out, certain of its expressions occur in the poem *Le Triomphe du Berlan* by Jean Perrache (Paris, 1585), suggesting that it may go back in this form to the XVI century.

## 2.1 Early XVII-century French Jeu des Tarots (1637)

### *Basics*

There are three players, each playing for himself. A full 78-card Italian-suited pack is used. The Fool serves as Excuse, apparently without the exchange of an empty card for it. In the suits the original ranking is observed.

### *Nomenclature*

The trumps, including the Fool, are called *trionphes*. The XXI is called *le Monde* (the World – the subject of this card); the Fool is called *le Math* (from Italian *Matto*); and trump I is called *le Bagat* (from Italian *Bagatto*). These three cards, together with the four Kings, are called *Tarots*. Knights are called *Chevaliers*, as is usual in France, and Jacks are called *Faons*, which is not. Game points are called *marques*. The Ace of Coins is called *la belle*.

### *Deal and Declarations*

The players cut to determine the first dealer: the one cutting the highest-ranking card deals. (Trumps rank above suit cards, but the Fool below all other cards.) The dealer shows the bottom card of the pack to the other players, and claims one *marque* from each of the other players if it is a *Tarot*. He then gives out the cards either in threes or in fives, giving 25 cards to each of the other players and 28 to himself. He discards four cards, the other two players one each, which count to them at the end of play. Neither trumps nor *Tarots* may be discarded. When the discards have been made, each player in turn (presumably beginning with the one on the dealer's right) declares any special combination of cards he has in his



hand. The value of each declaration is immediately paid by each of the other two players. The declarations, with their values in *marques*, are as follows:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Ace of Coins (called <i>la belle</i> ) – 1   |  |
| XXI, Fool and I – 3                          | ten trumps – 1                                       |
| four <i>Tarots</i> – 1                       | fifteen trumps – 2                                   |
| five <i>Tarots</i> – 2                       | twenty trumps – 3                                    |
| six <i>Tarots</i> – 3                        | K, Q, C, J of the same suit ( <i>Impériale</i> ) – 1 |
| seven <i>Tarots</i> – 4                      | four Qs, four Cs or four Js ( <i>Impériale</i> ) – 1 |
| seven <i>Tarots</i> and the <i>belle</i> – 5 | the four highest trumps ( <i>Brizigole</i> ) – 1     |
| three Kings – 1                              | the four lowest trumps ( <i>Brizigole</i> ) – 1      |
| four Kings – 3                               | the five highest trumps ( <i>Brizigole</i> ) – 2     |
| two Kings and the Fool – 1                   | the five lowest trumps ( <i>Brizigole</i> ) – 2      |
| three Kings and the Fool – 2                 | the six highest trumps ( <i>Brizigole</i> ) – 3      |
| four Kings and the Fool – 6                  | the six lowest trumps ( <i>Brizigole</i> ) – 3       |

The term '*Brizigole*' is reminiscent of the term '*Versicola*', used in the game of *Minchiate* described in Chapter 12 for any of the special combinations of cards recognised in that game; it is certainly of Italian origin. A player who has the *belle* (Ace of Coins), but not all seven *Tarots*, may claim 1 *marque* from each of the other players when he plays the *belle*, whether he wins or loses the trick. A card or cards used for any declaration may also be used for another declaration of a different category. Thus if 'four Kings' is declared, the Kings may also be used for a declaration of however many *Tarots* the player has, even if he has only these four. The same presumably applies to a declaration of three Kings and the Fool, though this is not explicitly stated; but it seems likely that the high premium for four Kings and the Fool includes that for five *Tarots*. A player who holds just two of the XXI, Fool and Bagat may ask, "Qui n'a le sien?", thereby requiring the player who has none of them to pay him one *marque*. In making a declaration, a player must show the relevant cards to the others. No player is obliged to make a declaration; one who does not may not claim for it later. It seems that it is not allowed to lead the Fool to a trick; a player who finds himself obliged to lead it to the last trick pays 2 *marques* to each of the opponents (the suit of the second card

counts as that led). Each opponent pays 6 *marques* to a player who wins the last trick with the Bagat or a King. A player who wins a trick with a *Tarot* is paid one *marque* by each of the other two; one who loses a *Tarot* to an opponent pays one *marque* to each of them.

### *Card points*

At the end of play, the cards are counted in threes; if a card is not given in exchange for the Fool, one player will, when counting out the cards won in tricks, together with his discard, have one card left over, and one will have two. Presumably the two cards will count as if there were three of them, and the one card will count nothing (if a low card). The cards have their standard values. There will be a total of 78 points altogether. A player with between 16 and 20 points pays 1 *marque* to each of the other two; one with between 11 and 15 points pays 2; one with between 6 and 10 points pays 3; and one with less than 6 pays 4. A player with more than 20 points has nothing to pay.

### *Penalties*

For making an illegal discard – 2 *marques* to each opponent, and deprivation of all other scores in that hand; for not discarding, or discarding the wrong number – 1 *marque* to each; if there is a misdeal, the hand is cancelled; for revoking – 1 *marque* to each opponent, and deprivation of all other scores in that hand, provided that the revoke is spotted before the next trick is collected.

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RT mentions a two-handed version, but is disparaging about it.

## 2.2 Two-handed XVII-century French Tarot

With two players, all is as in game 2.1, save that one of the three hands dealt is a *mort* (dead hand), and remains face down. The winner of each trick draws the next card from the *mort*, showing it to his opponent, and adds it to his trick.

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The *Mémoires* of the abbé de Marolles record that Princess Louise-Marie de Gonzague-Nevers suggested some improvement in the rules of the game and asked him to include it in his account. From his words in RT, Thierry Depaulis has inferred that the improvement consisted in the reduction of the pack from 78 to 66 cards, the 66-card form of the game being described, very favourably, in RT. It does not seem likely that the use of this shortened pack was much copied.

### 2.3 66-Card French Tarot (1637)

A 66-card Italian-suited pack is used, obtained by removing the Ace, 2 and 3 of Swords and Batons and the 8, 9 and 10 of Cups and Coins from the full pack. The dealer gives 21 cards to each of the other two players and 24 to himself: he discards four cards and they discard one each. Otherwise, all is as in game 2.1. There will be a total of only 72 card points in the players' hands at the end of play, but apparently the same payments are made as in game 2.1.

*Variant.* The game may be played by two players with a *mort*, just as in game 2.2.

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The next French account of the game of *Taros* was given in 1659 in the second edition of *La Maison académique des jeux* (MA), and reprinted in all editions up to 1703. The book states that “the Swiss and the Germans do not ordinarily play at any other game”; it was certainly well known in Switzerland by that date, but it had probably only recently reached Germany. MA describes three French and one Swiss version of the game. The account is far less lucid than that in RT, and may be a garbled account by someone unfamiliar with the game. Only the account given in MA of the Swiss game makes good sense as a description of a game lying in the main stream of Tarot; though somewhat lacking in detail, it may have been supplied by a different hand. It should be noted that, according to MA, the French practice of having the cards in all four suits rank in the same order, with the Ace as the lowest-ranking card, had been adopted by 1659,

although in the games described in RT in 1637, the original order was still observed.

#### 2.4 Le jeu de Taros (France, 1659)

##### *Basics*

The number of players is unspecified; each plays for himself. The full 78-card Italian-suited pack is used. The Fool serves as Excuse; it is explicitly said to be with the exchange of an empty card for it. In the suits the 10s always follow the Js.

##### *Nomenclature*

The trumps, including the Fool, are called *trionphes*. The XXI is called *le Monde*; the Fool is called *le Fou* and trump I is called *le Basteleur*. Knights are called *Chevaliers*, and Jacks *Valets*.

##### *Deal and play*

The number of cards to be dealt to each player may vary according to agreement. The dealer takes no more cards than the other players, and there is no discard. At the beginning of each hand, each player puts an agreed stake on the table. The hands are then played out in tricks; it is not stated who leads to the first trick.

##### *Card points*

At the end of play, each player counts out his cards. The valuation is as follows:

|                      |          |
|----------------------|----------|
| The Fool             | 5 points |
| The <i>Monde</i>     | 4 points |
| The <i>Basteleur</i> | 4 points |
| Each King            | 4 points |
| Each Queen           | 3 points |
| Each Knight          | 2 points |
| Each Jack            | 1 point  |

This point-system suggests that the point-total for each player is calculated by the original method (1 point for each trick), though this is not explained: exchanging a card for the Excuse would have no purpose if empty cards were irrelevant to the

point-total, and a value of 1 point for the Jacks would be equivalent to making them empty cards if the cards were counted out in sets. The player who has the highest point-total wins all the stakes.

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### **2.5 Le jeu de Taros (second version) (France, 1659)**

A full 78-card Italian-suited pack is used. There may be any number of players, from two to six, each playing for himself; four is the preferred number. Each player receives twelve cards; the dealer takes no extra ones, and there are no discards. The usual rules of play hold good. At the end of the hand, each player calculates the total value of his counting cards, and adds to it the number of cards in excess of twelve that he has won in tricks, or subtracts from it the number by which they fall short of twelve; his score may be positive or negative. A running total is kept from hand to hand, and the player first to achieve a total of 50 points wins the rubber. Although the text mentions only that the Fool is worth 5 points and each King 4 points, the point-values are presumably as in game 2.4.

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### **2.6 La rigueur (France, 1659)**

MA mentions only the special feature of this game, which may therefore be intended to be played in other respects like game 2.4 or 2.5. The special feature is that the suit of Swords functions as a secondary trump series. A trick is won by the highest regular trump it contains, or, if there is no regular trump, by the highest card of the Swords suit, or, failing either, by the highest card of the suit led. Players must, as usual, follow suit; one who cannot must play either a regular trump or a Sword, at his choice. If the Swords suit is led, a player who cannot follow suit must play a regular trump. If a regular trump is led, a player who has none may play any card; he does not have to play a Sword.

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Apart from a gambling game called *Triomphe forcée*, described Appendix C, MA describes in addition a Swiss form of Tarot. Swiss references to the game of the XVI and XVII centuries consist entirely of ordinances, forbidding various card games but permitting others, including *trogge(n)*, as Tarot was called in Swiss German; the earliest known is from 1572, and they continue up to 1741. It is only from the MA that we know how the game was played in Switzerland in the XVII century; the description is cursory.

## 2.7 Early Swiss Troggen (1659)

### *Basics*

There are three players, each playing for himself. The full 78-card Italian-suited pack is used. The Fool serves as Excuse, with the exchange of an empty card for it. In the suits the original ranking was probably observed, though the text fails to state this. It does not give the German terminology. MA lists the names of the trumps, with their numbers, only for the Swiss game. The names are the standard French ones, but there is an oddity in that the Emperor is numbered 3 and the Empress 4. This may be an error but may also have been the practice in some regions, since we have one XVIII-century French pack with the same reversal of the usual order.

### *Deal, play and scoring*

The dealer gives 25 cards to each of the other two players, and 28 to himself, discarding three. Probably he is not allowed to discard Kings, trumps or the Fool, though no restriction is stated. The cards are counted in threes. The point-values of the counting cards are as follows:

|             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| Trump XXI   | 5 points |
| Trump I     | 5 points |
| Each King   | 5 points |
| Each Queen  | 4 points |
| Each Knight | 3 points |
| The Fool    | 3 points |

The omission of a value of 2 points for each Jack is probably an oversight of the author of MA. A rubber (*partie*) consists of a round of three hands: players keep a running total of their points, and the one with the highest total wins the rubber.

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By 1725 the game of Tarot had been completely forgotten in Paris, and probably everywhere else in France except in the east of the country – Alsace, Burgundy, Lyonnais, Dauphiné and Provence; it continued to flourish in Burgundy and Franche-Comté until its general revival throughout France in the XX century. Thierry Depaulis dates its abrupt decline in the rest of France as early as 1650.

## CHAPTER 3

### Classic Eighteenth-century Tarot outside Italy

Two games, a three-handed and a four-handed one, can be regarded as the fundamental forms of the game of Tarot. In both, the full 78-card pack is used; in both, the Fool serves as Excuse, each honour counts 5 points, each Queen 4, each Cavalier 3 and each Jack 2, the honours being the four Kings, the XXI, the I and the Fool. In neither game are there any bids, declarations or special bonuses: the only way of scoring points is on cards won in tricks. In the three-handed form there are no partnerships; the dealer receives twenty-eight cards in the deal and discards three, the other two players receive twenty-five cards each. The discard counts for the dealer at the end of the round, and honours may not be discarded. The cards are counted in threes, so that there are 78 points altogether. In the four-handed game, the players form two fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table. The dealer receives twenty-one cards and discards two, the others receive nineteen each. The discarded cards may not include honours, and count for the dealer's side at the end of the round. The cards are counted in sets of four, the two discarded cards being treated as a complete set, so that there are 72 points altogether.

We shall meet many Tarot games that diverge only slightly from these two fundamental forms, and in fact every Tarot game developed outside Italy from the XVIII century onwards may be seen as constructed on one of these forms as a basis. We have already seen that a three-handed game of this type was already known in XVII-century Switzerland (game 2.7). There is good reason to regard



all Tarot games played outside Italy, except possibly for those that may have been played before 1700 in Paris and Normandy, as stemming from a single tradition of play established at some early date in eastern France and its immediate neighbours, including the French-speaking part of Switzerland. It is true that some of the later developments were far-reaching, involving not merely extensions but in some cases radical modifications of the fundamental games. Nevertheless, the history of Tarot, from the XVIII century to the present day, can be understood only by taking the two fundamental forms to be the starting-point.

The hundred years between about 1730 and 1830 were the heyday of the game of Tarot; it was played not only in northern Italy, eastern France, Switzerland, Germany and Austro-Hungary, but also in Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and even Russia. Not only was it, in these areas, a famous game with many devotees: it was also, during that period, more truly an international game than it had ever been before or than it has ever been since. At no stage has Tarot ever been an international game in the sense that Bridge and Chess are international, namely that there are international competitions and internationally agreed rules; international games in this sense are a fairly modern phenomenon. Tarot has always been a game played at home or in the local tavern, coffeehouse or club, and therefore constantly liable to develop local variations. During the century that begins in about 1730, however, the manner of playing Tarot with the 78-card pack assumed more or less the same general form wherever it was played. There were countless small local variations in the exact rules and method of scoring, but little deviation in the broad principles of play from one country to another. The substitution, in some areas, of the French-suited for the Italian-suited Tarot pack made no difference whatever in the manner of playing the game, any more than it made a difference to the game of Ombre whether it was played with a Spanish-suited or French-suited pack.

The type of Italian-suited pack used in Germany and Central Europe, namely one deriving from the Tarot de Marseille and with inscriptions in French,

provides one reason for regarding the game of Tarot as having travelled there via French-speaking lands and not, say, direct from Italy; a second reason is the conclusion argued for above, that virtually all non-Italian games have a common source. Exactly when and by what route the game reached Germany is problematic. The *Maison académique* assures us that by 1659 Tarot was well established in Germany. On the other hand Fischart, the German translator of Rabelais, included a greatly expanded list of the games played in Gargantua, but omitted from it the game of Tarot, which Rabelais had included. Fischart was born in 1546 or 1547 in Strasbourg; the first edition of his version of Rabelais came out, under the title *Geschichtklitterung*, in 1575, the second in 1582, and the third, in which the list of games was yet further enlarged, in the year of his death, 1590<sup>1</sup>. Since Rabelais clearly went to great pains to include the names of as many games as possible in his list, this provides strong evidence that Tarot was not played in Alsace in Fischart's lifetime.

Since Alsace is the obvious route for Tarot to have taken from France to Germany, the obvious conclusion would be that Tarot did not reach Germany until around 1600. There are, however, two possible pieces of evidence in favour of an earlier introduction of Tarot to Germany. The first is Detlef Hoffmann's argument that the Tarot pack made in 1557 by Catelin Geoffroy of Lyons must have been intended for export to Germany, on the grounds that it uses the non-standard suit-signs introduced by Virgil Solis of Nuremberg. This evidence is not conclusive, as it is equally plausible that these cards were made for use in Lorraine. The second piece of evidence is the statement of Ivan Honl<sup>2</sup>, unfortunately without a precise reference, that Tarot cards were first mentioned in Bohemia in 1586. It is surprising that Tarot should have reached Bohemia before Alsace, but it could be explained by supposing that the game first reached

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<sup>1</sup> A modern reprint of the third edition of the *Geschichtklitterung* of Johann der Täufer Friedrich Fischart was published in Düsseldorf in 1963, edited by Ute Nyssen. The chapter on games is chap. 25, pp. 238-51 in the 1963 edition, the list of games being on pp. 239-49.

Germany not from France but from Switzerland, where, as we have seen in Chapter 2, the game was already played in 1572. However, in the absence of further evidence the precise route and date of the arrival of Tarot in Germany must be regarded as an as yet unresolved mystery.

However it arrived there, the game must have become well established in southern Germany in the early XVII century, and even if it did not originally enter from France via Alsace, French influence must have made itself felt at an early stage. The most striking evidence of this is the French terminology used by German Tarot players. In the *Maison Académique* the use of the Fou was expressed by saying that '*le Fou sert d'excuse*'. In the XVIII century French Tarot players began calling the Fool *l'Excuse*, as they do to this day. In German-speaking countries this name was corrupted to *der Schkis*, *der Skys*, *der Sciüs*, *der Sküs*, etc., the form now in colloquial use in Austria being *der Gstieß*. The derivation must be from the French word rather than from Italian *scusa*, which was not in the same way used as the name of the card. The XXI is regularly known by German-speaking Tarot players as *der Mond* (the Moon), and was formerly also called *der Mongue* or *der Mongur*, all of which are corruptions of French *le Monde* (the World). These could, indeed, be thought to be derived from Italian *il Mondo*, but we can only see the term *Kavallerie*, for a set of court cards in one suit, as an adaptation of the French *chevalerie*, especially as there was no cognate term in Italian.

There is, however, one example of direct Italian influence on XVIII century Tarot games in German speaking countries. *Die beste und neueste Art das in den vornehmsten Gesellschaften heutiges Tages so beliebte Taroc-Spiel sowol in drey Personen zum König, als in vier wirklichen Personen mit zweyerley Karten recht und wohl zu spielen* (BNA), published in Nuremberg in 1763, contains the earliest account of a Tarot game specifically said to be played in

<sup>2</sup> Ivan Honl, *Z Minulosti karetňi hry v Čechách*, Prague, 1947, p. 31.

Austria. This game is close to the classic four-handed Tarot described at the beginning of this chapter, and proves to be almost identical to the XVIII-century Lombard game; it will be described in chapter six (6.1). We shall see, however, that this Milanese game was itself an import to Italy from France. This game continued to be included in other German card-game books up to the early XIX century, and in Dutch ones up to 1836.

Despite the vogue in Vienna for a Milanese form of Tarot, the game of Tarot in general must have been known in Vienna before the Austrian acquisition of Milan in 1713, at least if it was known in Bohemia by 1586. In any case, by the second half of our 'international' century the influence of the German form of the game proved stronger than any influences from Italy, and the forms of Tarot as played in Germany and in Austria are not to be distinguished from one another. The mutual influence was certainly very much assisted by the shared language: many card-game books in the German language were published simultaneously in Vienna and in some German city, and these books must have helped to maintain a common tradition in German-speaking lands.

Three complications were commonly added to the fundamental three- and four-handed games in France and Germany. These features were well established in Germany by 1754, on the testimony of the booklet *Regeln bey dem Taroc-Spiele* (RTS) published in Leipzig in that year. It is clear that the ideas originated in France, from the French vocabulary used in that and other early German accounts, and from the fact that similar features were already present in the French game 2.1 a century earlier.

The first extra feature was that of bonus scores for declaring, before play, certain combinations of cards held in the hand of a single player. Unlike the declarations of card combinations that had been used in some Italian forms of Tarocco as early as the XVI century, the bonus in France and Germany was paid only for having the cards in one's hand before play, not for collecting similar combinations in one's tricks. Moreover, the combinations recognised in Italy

were different. It is thus probable that the introduction of this feature into French XVII-century and 'international' XVIII-century Tarot did not result from the imitation of any Italian prototype, but from the independent application to the game of Tarot of an idea generally familiar in card play. The most usual combinations of cards that could be declared were: ten or more trumps; all three of the trump honours (XXI, I and Fool); all four Kings; and a *Chevalerie*, that is, a set of all four court cards in one suit. Often the Fool functioned as a wild card for purposes of declarations: it could be substituted for any one missing card in a declaration. Usually, a declaration made by treating the Fool as a substitute was worth less than one entirely made up of genuine cards. The declaration of three trump honours was usually known as Matadors, in imitation of a bonus in the fashionable game of Ombre<sup>3</sup>, and a complication then arose because Matadors in Ombre can be extended to consist of an unbroken sequence of more than three top trumps. In Germany, this idea was grafted on to the trump honours declaration by regarding the XXI, I and Fool as the principal Matadors, but allowing a player who held all three of these to add to the declaration any further trumps in unbroken sequence from the XX down, thus increasing the bonus.

The second extra feature was that of a bonus for winning a trick with the trump I (known as the Pagat) or a King, and a penalty for losing the Pagat or a King. Usually the bonus or penalty was doubled if the event occurred in the last trick. The word *Pagat* is, of course, a corruption of the Italian *Bagatto*, and since it, or some very similar word, was almost universally used for the trump I, we shall henceforth refer to that card as the Pagat save in connection with Italian games. In some versions the bonuses and penalties apply only to the Pagat, not to Kings, and in some there is a penalty for losing a King, but no bonus for winning a trick with one. This is reasonable, in that winning a trick with a King is not difficult, indeed it cannot be prevented if all players have at least one card of the

<sup>3</sup> A description of Ombre and its history can be found in *The Oxford Guide to Card Games* by David Parlett (1990), reprinted in 1991 as *A History of Card Games*, pp. 197ff.

suit. Both the bonuses for declarations and the bonuses and penalties for winning or losing the Pagat and Kings were superimposed upon the basic game as extra payments. They did not affect the determination, at the end of the hand, of who had won the hand and by how much, which still depended solely on the cards won in tricks.

It should be noted that in the three-player game, the penalty for losing the Pagat or a King is paid to both opponents of the player who originally held the card, not just the one who captured it. This adds to the interest of the game by providing an incentive for a player to help another to capture the third player's Pagat or King. This scoring structure also encourages a player who holds strong cards including the Pagat to try for a double bonus by driving out all the opposing trumps and saving the Pagat to win the last trick, and if the opponents see this danger they will co-operate to prevent it. Thus was conceived the bonus known as "Pagat ultimo", which was to become one of the most characteristic and interesting features of many of the later varieties of Tarot. This bonus for winning the last trick with the Pagat survived long after special bonuses and penalties for bringing home or losing the Pagat or a King in tricks earlier than the last had been dropped. It was certainly not in Italy that this important invention occurred, but either in Germany or, slightly less probably, in France. We do indeed find the idea in some of the games played in Piedmont, though not in those played in Lombardy, in the XVIII century, and this may explain the use in Austria of the Italian term *ultimo*; but, as already remarked, most of the games played in northern Italy from the XVIII century on were not of Italian origin. The idea of the Bagatto ultimo is wholly absent from those Tarot games played in Italy which we know to be free of foreign influence, that is, in the Bolognese and Sicilian forms of the game and in Minchiate; and there is no hint of it in any of the early Italian references to Tarocco.

The bonuses and penalties relating to the Pagat were originally developed for the three-handed game. There was a problem in transferring them to the four-

handed game with partners, for two reasons. One question that arose was what was to happen when the trick to which the Pagat was played was won by the partner of the player who had the Pagat. In the XVIII century, such an event normally carried with it neither a bonus nor a penalty, though in later games a team that played the Pagat to the last trick and failed to win was usually penalised even if the trick was won by the player's partner. The second question was who deserved the bonus or incurred the penalty: only the individual player, or his partner as well? Here the principle of collective responsibility prevailed: the partner has assisted or hindered his colleague by his play, and must be rewarded or penalised along with him. Thus, in the four-handed game, if a player won a trick with the Pagat, he was paid 5 game points by one of the opponents, or 10 if it was the last trick, and his partner was paid the same by the other opponent; and, if the Pagat was captured by the opponents, these payments were reversed.

The third extra feature was a restriction on when the Fool, Excuse or Scüs could be played. In Germany this usually took the form of a prohibition on playing it to any of the last three tricks; in later forms, this was varied to a deprivation of the Scüs's immunity from capture in the last three tricks, so that a player might legally play it to one of those tricks, but then lost it. In France, the restriction applied only to the last trick, but did not have any very general importance for the future development of the game.

From the mid XVIII century onwards, Germany was prolific of card-game books. The two earliest accounts of classic XVIII-century Tarock known to us are the 1754 booklet RTS mentioned above, whose text reappears in the 1755 edition of *Palamedes Redivivus* (PR), and the account in the first edition of *Die Kunst, die Welt erlaubt mitzunehmen in den verschiedenen Arten der Spiele* (KW), published in Leipzig in 1756, which is also to be found in BNA (1763). To these may be added one in *L'Hombre Royal* (HR), a volume published in Vienna and Prague in 1824, since, although it is so very much later, the description of Tarock that it contains must, save for one footnote, have been

copied from some much earlier original. These three accounts, though differently worded, describe exactly the same three-handed game; but one can still detect some historical development. The KW/NBA text consists of a general description followed by a set of numbered rules, and there is a little inconsistency between these, notably over the payment for a Cavallerie. It is therefore probable that the first half is a reprint of some earlier description to which a more up-to-date set of rules has been appended, without eliminating the contradictions; in the account that follows, the discrepancies will be indicated by means of the terms 'earlier stratum' and 'later stratum'. The HR account appears to be more archaic than either of the other two. The use of French terminology, particularly, in RTS/PR, of the term *Excuse* for the Fool, makes it very likely that an identical or similar game was played in France. It cannot be told from the RTS/PR text whether the game was to be played with an Italian- or French-suited pack, but KW/NBA and HR specify a French-suited one, KW mentioning the animal figures on the trump cards. KW/NBA refers to the Italian-suited pack, but says that it is mostly used for a four-handed game, going on (in the second edition) to explain the Lombard/Viennese game 6.1 mentioned above. It also says that the game of Taroc had only recently been introduced into Germany, a statement we know to be erroneous; it presumably testifies to the spread of the game to some new area.

### 3.1 German Taroc (mid-XVIII century)

#### *Terminology*

Trumps are called *Tarocs* (RTS and KW) or *Taroks* (HR). The XXI is called *der Mongue* (KW and HR), *der Mond* (HR) or simply no. 21 (RTS); the I is called *der Pagat* (all three sources), *der Bagat* (RTS) or *der Pacat* (KW); the Fool is called *der Excuse* (RTS), *der Sckis* (RTS and KW), *der Schkis* (KW), *der Skis* (KW) or *der Sciüs* (HR). The discard is called *der Skar* (KW).



*Deal and discard*

There are three players. A full 78-card French-suited pack is used. Deal and play are counter-clockwise. The dealer gives twenty-five cards to each player, in five rounds of five cards each, beginning with the player on his right, and taking in addition the last three cards for himself in the last round. He discards three of his 28 cards face down beside him, and these count for him at the end of the round. He may not discard Kings. If he has exactly three trumps including the Pagat, or if he has the Skis, the Pagat and exactly one other trump, he may, if he wishes, discard these three cards. In no other circumstances may he discard a trump. HR states that some players allow that the deal is to be cancelled, and the cards redealt by the same dealer, if any player has only one or two trumps; but RTS and KW do not mention this rule. Note that there is no general prohibition on discarding the Skis.

*Declarations*

After discarding, the dealer makes any declarations he chooses of combinations of cards in his hand; the other two players then do the same in turn. The dealer cannot declare any cards he has discarded. According to RTS and KW, all declared cards must be shown to the other two players (HR is silent on this point). No player is obliged to make any declaration even if he is able to. The possible declarations are:

(i) **Matadors.** HR and the earlier stratum of KW allow the declaration only of three of these, which must consist of the Mongue (XXI), Pagat and Skis. KW gives a value of 10 game points for this, but HR says that some players value it at 10 and some at 20 game points, agreement being necessary before sitting down to the game. RTS and the later stratum of KW allow a declaration of three or more Matadors, consisting of the Mongue, Pagat and Skis, to which may be added further trumps in consecutive sequence from the XX down. The value is 10 game points for three Matadors, plus 5 more points for each Matador in excess of three.

(ii) **Cavallerie.** This consists of all four court cards in one suit, and is valued at 4 game points by HR and the earlier stratum of KW, and at 10 game points by RTS and the later stratum of KW. RTS and the later stratum of KW also allow the declaration of a half Cavallerie, consisting of any three court cards of one suit together with the Skis, with a value of 5 game points; a whole Cavallerie and a half Cavallerie cannot be declared in the same suit. HR and the earlier stratum of KW do not recognise half Cavallerie declarations.

(iii) **Ten trumps.** HR says that this declaration is recognised in many localities, and that the players must agree on the value to be set on it. KW allows the declaration unreservedly, with a value of 10 game points, which, however, are not to be paid immediately, but only at the end of the round, and then only if the player concerned has made more than 26 points on the cards he has won in tricks. RTS allows a declaration of ten or more trumps, with a value of 10 game points plus 5 game points for each trump in excess of ten; this is paid immediately, with no proviso about points won on cards. In no case does the Skis count for this purpose as a trump.

(iv) **Four Kings.** RTS, but not KW or HR, allows a declaration of all four Kings, valued at 10 game points; alternatively, one may declare three Kings with the Skis, with a value of 5 game points. One may not, of course, make both these declarations.

A player making a declaration is paid for it immediately by the other two players, save in the case of a declaration of ten trumps under the KW rule.

### *Play*

When all three players have had a chance to make declarations, the player to the right of the dealer leads to the first trick. Play is under the usual rules and the cards rank in their original order. The Skis serves as Excuse, with exchange, but is not surrendered if the holder makes no tricks. When the holder of the Skis has no more trumps, then, according to RTS and KW, the Skis must be played as soon as a plain suit is led in which the holder is void; HR does not impose this

obligation. The Skis may not be played to any of the last three tricks. RTS and KW do not allow the Skis to be led to a trick; if a player finds himself with the lead to the twenty-second trick, and has the Skis, he must surrender the lead to the player on his right, and must play the Skis to that trick. According to HR, however, custom varies over whether the Skis may be led to a trick. If it is allowed, then the other two players must play trumps if they can if the Skis is led. It is not explained what happens if neither of them has any trumps left; probably it is illegal to lead the Skis in this case, as in the later German games such as 4.1.

### *Bonuses and penalties*

Apart from a passing reference to Pagat ultimo in a sentence that appears to have been borrowed from KW in a misplaced attempt to bring the antiquated account that was being copied up to date, HR mentions only penalties: the player who has the Pagat pays an agreed sum to each opponent if it is captured, and twice that sum to each if it is captured in the last trick. According to RTS and KW, 5 game points are paid to each opponent if the Pagat is beaten by a higher trump, and 10 game points if this happens in the last trick; but a player who wins the last trick with the Pagat is paid 10 game points by each opponent.

### *Scoring*

The counting cards have their standard values and are counted in threes. If the player who had the Skis made no tricks, he counts 4 points for his Skis, while the player who won the trick to which he played it counts his two odd cards as if they were three. There are thus in all cases 78 points altogether. Each player with fewer than 26 points pays, in all, as many game points as he has card points short of 26; each player with more than 26 points receives, in all, as many game points as he has card points in excess of 26. (E.g. if A has 29 card points, B 24 and C 25, B pays A 2 game points and C pays A 1 game point; if A has 29 points, B 30 and C 19, C pays 3 game points to A and 4 game points to B.)

From France itself we have only one XVIII-century account of Tarot, and that from an unexpected source. The passage on Tarot in de Gébelin's *Monde primitif*, dating from 1781, is mainly concerned with the author's speculations on the Egyptian origin and esoteric significance of the cards. However, in addition to this, although he did not himself know the game played with the cards, de Gébelin retails an account of it given to him by a friend. He acknowledges that the game was at the time unknown in Paris; in fact, it had been forgotten in Paris and everywhere in France save in the east of the country since the beginning of the XVIII century, and perhaps since the middle of the XVII.<sup>4</sup> He names his informant as Monsieur L'A. R. (the abbé Rive, an early writer on the history of playing cards, according to the speculation of J.-M. Lhôte, but possibly the abbé Roubaud, according to Thierry Depaulis). We cannot be certain that the informant succeeded in transmitting all the details correctly, but there are so many points of agreement with the French game of 1637 (see games 2.1 and 2.2) that we should take de Gébelin's description as in the main authentic. Further evidence of his accuracy is that in modern French Tarot there are distinct melds of ten and of thirteen trumps, a feature not exactly paralleled in any game played elsewhere. The game de Gébelin describes is a two-handed one, played with a *mort*, a dead hand of twenty-five cards. This can hardly have been the principal form, but has obviously been adapted rather mechanically from a three-handed game similar to 2.1.

### 3.2 Two-handed XVIII century French Tarot (after de Gébelin)

#### *Terminology*

Trumps are called *Atous*, the XXI *le Monde*, the I *le Pagad* and the Fool *le Mat* or *le Fou*. These last three cards are called collectively *Atous-Tarots*, and they together with the four Kings are known as *Tarots*. The five top trumps (XVII to

<sup>4</sup> See footnotes 1 and 2 to Chapter 9.

XXI) are called *grands Atous* and the five lowest trumps (1 to V) *petits Atous*. The pack used is a 78-card Italian-suited one.

### *Deal and discard*

The dealer gives out three hands of twenty-five cards each, in five rounds of five cards each, one hand to his opponent, one to form the mort (dead hand), which is not touched until the end of the play, and one to himself. In the last round of the deal, he takes the last three cards for himself, and discards three, which count to him at the end of the play. He may not discard Kings, the Fou or trumps.

### *Declarations*

Each player in turn may make any of the following declarations:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| All three <i>Atous-Tarots</i> (Monde, Pagad and Fou) | 15 points |
| Ten trumps   | 10 points |
| Thirteen trumps                                      | 15 points |
| All four court cards of one suit                     | 5 points  |
| All five <i>grands Atous</i>                         | 15 points |
| All five <i>petits Atous</i>                         | 15 points |
| Any four of the <i>grands Atous</i>                  | 10 points |
| Any four of the <i>petits Atous</i>                  | 10 points |
| Any three of the <i>petits Atous</i>                 | 5 points  |
| Any three of the <i>petits Atous</i>                 | 5 points  |

If a player has just two of the three *Atous-Tarots*, he asks his opponent, "*Qui ne l'a?*" If the opponent has the third *Atou-Tarot*, he shows it, and neither of them scores; but, if the opponent cannot show the third one, the player holding two scores 5 points. A player declaring ten or thirteen trumps must show that many to his opponent; for the other declarations, the cards need not be shown. The probability is that, for a declaration of ten or thirteen trumps, the Fou counts as a trump, but this is not made explicit. The declarations take place before play begins, but it is not said which player declares first.

### *Play*

The hands are played out under the usual rules. Almost certainly, the cards rank in each suit K, Q, C, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, A, though this is not stated. The

Fou serves as Excuse; probably a card must be given in exchange for it, though this is not stated either.

### *Bonuses*

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| For capturing the opponent's Pagad                 | 5 points  |
| For capturing a King from the opponent             | 5 points  |
| For having two Kings and the Fou in one's tricks   | 5 points  |
| For having three Kings and the Fou in one's tricks | 15 points |

These last two bonuses look rather odd. At the very least one would expect that there should as well be a bonus of 5 points for having three Kings without the Fou, and of 15 points for having all four Kings. De Gébelin's actual words are merely, 'Le Fou avec deux Rois, compte 5 points: avec trois, quinze' (the Fou with two Kings counts 5 points; with three, fifteen), which one would take to describe a declaration were it not that it occurred, not in that section, but in that headed 'Manner of playing one's cards'. It is quite likely that de Gébelin has mistaken a declaration for a bonus, especially given that the 1637 game had similar bonuses for Kings held in the hand, not collected in tricks; if so, it is even more probable that scores for three or all four genuine Kings should be added.

### *Scoring*

At the end of the play, each player reckons up the points on the cards he has won in tricks, counting in twos and assigning the standard values to the counting cards; the dealer will have one odd card, which counts nothing if it is low, and one less than its value if it is a counting card. Each player adds to his total the points for bonuses and declarations; the player with the higher grand total scores the difference between his total and his opponent's. The game ends with that hand in which one or both players reach a cumulative total of 100 points, and is won by the player who has the higher score at the end of that hand.

---

We have seen that the 1637 text on French Tarot (FT) also mentions two-player versions, though they are dismissed as not very congenial. However, the

fact that in modern French Tarot the cards are counted in twos could indicate that at some stage a version with two-card tricks was regarded as important and in some way typical. A very similar two-handed game, but with different declarations and bonuses, also played to 100 up, was common in Germany, and will be described later (3.5).

A booklet published in Amsterdam in 1846, *Beknople Handleiding tot het Tarok-Spel*, gives a version of classic three-handed Tarot as played in the Netherlands. The development of it which we shall describe in Chapter 4 under the name Grosstarock was already known in the Netherlands in 1821, so that the 1846 booklet was probably describing an old-fashioned form. The terminology used in the present booklet is markedly French, which may indicate that the game described was originally played in France or Belgium; its true epoch may have been around 1800.

### 3.3 Three-handed Dutch Tarok (1846 text)

#### *Terminology*

Trumps are called *Taroks*; the 1 is called *Pagato* and the Fool is called the *Excuse*. A set of all four court cards of one suit is called a *chevalerie*.

#### *Deal and discard*

There are three players. A 78-card French-suited pack is used. Deal and play are *clockwise*. The dealer gives twenty-five cards to each player, in seven rounds of three each, followed by a round of four each, beginning with the player on his left; in the last round of the deal, he takes the last three cards himself. He discards three cards, which count to him at the end of the round. No restriction is stated on the cards he may discard; probably this is an oversight, and he may not discard Kings or trumps.

*Declarations*

After the dealer has discarded, the declarations are made in turn; it is not stated which player has the first chance to declare. The possible declarations, with their scores in game points, are:

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Ten trumps  | 5 points  |
| Nine trumps with the Excuse   | 5 points  |
| All four Kings  | 5 points  |
| All four Kings with the Excuse  | 10 points |
| Three Kings with the Excuse   | 5 points  |
| Chevalerie entière (all four court cards of one suit)                                     | 5 points  |
| Chevalerie entière par Excuse<br>(all four court cards of one suit with the Excuse)       | 10 points |
| Chevalerie par Excuse<br>(the King and two other court cards of one suit with the Excuse) | 5 points  |
| Matadors (the XXI, the Pagato and the Excuse)   | 5 points  |

The Excuse may be used in only one declaration. Note that there is no additional bonus for having more than ten trumps, and no obligation to reveal whether one has more than ten. The cards declared must be shown to the other players. Each opponent pays a player making a declaration immediately; but if one who has declared ten trumps or nine trumps with the Excuse fails to make 26 points on the cards he wins in tricks, he must pay back the bonus to each opponent. It is a little obscure whether there is in fact a declaration of Matadors (of which one may not, in any case, declare more than three), since an erratum to the section on declarations, printed at the end of the booklet and designed to correct the omission of the values of the XXI, the Pagato and the Excuse as counting cards, contrives to suppress the Matadors declaration; but this is almost certainly an error.

*Play*

When the declarations are completed, play begins; presumably the player to the left of the dealer leads to the first trick. The rules of play are as usual, save that, when a suit is led, and the third player is void in that suit, he is not obliged to play a trump if the second player has played one. In the suits, the cards rank in their



original order. The Excuse of course serves as Excuse, and, when it is played to a trick and taken back, another card is immediately given in exchange from those already won. Apparently the player who holds the Excuse is not allowed to play it until he has won a trick; nor, it seems, can it be led to a trick (except, perforce, the last one). However, if the Excuse is played to either of the two last tricks, it may no longer be taken back, but is lost to the winner of the trick.

### *Bonuses and penalties*

A player from whom the Pagato or a King is captured pays a penalty of 5 game points to each opponent; if the Pagato is lost in the last trick, he pays 10 game points. If a player wins the last trick with the Pagato, each of the other two players pays him a bonus of 10 game points. If a player wins the last two tricks with the XXI and the Pagato, in either order, each of the other two pays him a bonus of 20 game points. Playing a King to the last trick has no special significance.

### *Scoring*

At the end of the round, the cards are counted by the original method (Kings and trump honours are worth 4 points, Queens 3, Chevaliers 2, Jacks 1 and there is one additional point for each group of 3 cards). There are thus 78 points in the pack as usual. Between each pair of players, the one with fewer card points in tricks pays the other the difference between their totals. The net effect of this is that each player pays or receives three times the amount by which his point-total falls short of or exceeds 26.

---

We shall see that in the XIX century, the classic game evolved into Grosstarock in Germany and was supplanted in Austria and France by versions in which bidding was introduced. Nevertheless, there were some places where the game survived in its XVIII-century form. A small brochure in French entitled *Règlement du véritable ancien et noble Jeu de Tarot* was issued by the cardmaker

Geuens-Willaert of Bruges in about 1902, but probably reproduced a text of about 1890. It describes a straightforward form of the classic game.

### 3.4 Belgian Tarot (c. 1890-1910)

#### *Terminology*

The 21 is called *l'Ours* (the Bear), the 1 is called *le Pagat* and the Fool *le Fou* or *l'Excuse*. Trumps are called *atouts*.

#### *Deal*

There are three players, and a 78-card French-suited pack is used. The dealer gives 25 cards to each player in five rounds of five each. He takes the last three cards for himself and discards three. He may not discard trumps or Kings, save if he has just three trumps including the Pagat, when he may discard all three.

#### *Declarations*

Before play begins, each of the players in turn may declare any of the following combinations that he has in his hand; each of the other two players pays him the bonus attached to it.

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Matador (21, 1 and Excuse)                                 | 15 game points     |
| grande cavalerie (K, Q, C, J of one suit)                  | 8 game points      |
| petite cavalerie (3 court cards of a suit with the Excuse) | 4 game points      |
| quatre grands rois (all 4 Kings)                           | 12 game points     |
| quatre petits rois (3 Kings and the Excuse)                | 10 game points     |
| trois grands rois (3 Kings without the Excuse)             | 8 game points      |
| trois petits rois (2 Kings and the Excuse) <sup>5</sup>    | 4 game points      |
| 10 or more trumps  | 10 + 1 game points |

A player who declares ten or more trumps receives from each opponent as many game points as he has trumps: he does not show them, but says how many he has and whether or not they include the Pagat. It is not made plain whether in other declarations the cards must be shown.

<sup>5</sup> The text actually says "2 rois seulement", but this is obviously a misprint.

*Play*

Play is under the usual rules. Cards rank in their original order, with 10s following the Jacks in the black suits and Aces following the Jacks in the red suits. The Fool serves as Excuse without exchange, but is lost if it is played to any of the last five tricks. A player who brings the Pagat home before the last trick is awarded 5 game points by each of the other two; if he loses it before the last trick, he pays 5 game points to each opponent. If he makes the Pagat *à la bonne*, i.e. wins the last trick with it, he is paid 10 game points by each opponent; if he loses it in the last trick, he pays 10 game points to each opponent. At the end of the hand, each player's cards are counted in threes; two odd low cards count 1 point, one odd low card counts nothing. There are thus 78 points in all. Each player wins, in all, as many game points as he has points above 26, or pays, in all, as many as he has points below 26.

---

The classic three-handed game was adapted in Germany for play by two people in a manner very similar to the two-handed game described by de Gébelin; so similar, indeed, that they must have had a common origin. The two-handed game was clearly quite popular, and is set out in very many German card-game books throughout the nineteenth century, the earliest known to us being the *Neuster Spielalmanach für das Jahr* (NSa), published in 1800 in Berlin, whose author calls himself Julius Cäsar, and the latest the *Ausgewählte Kartenspiele* by Albert Stabenow, published in Leipzig 1908-10. Very probably the game goes back to at least about 1750. All the descriptions state that the declarations are the same as in the three-handed game, but it will be seen in Chapter 4 that the declarations admitted in the German three-handed game varied greatly during the period in question. Most of the card-game books simply repeat, word for word, the account of the two-handed game given in NSa (1800), although the *Neustes Spielbuch* (NS) published in Leipzig in 1840 has a fresh description with a different method of scoring. It is difficult to know whether to take the books at

their word, and assume that all the changes in the declarations admitted in the three-handed game were reflected in two-handed one, or whether the declarations in the two-handed game remained frozen at the stage when the original description of the game was first composed.

### 3.5 Two-handed German Tarok (XIX century)

#### *Deal and discard*

A 78-card French-suited pack is used. The dealer deals three hands of twenty-five cards, in five rounds of five each, one hand to his opponent, the second a dead hand that is not looked at until the end of the round, the third hand to himself; in the last round of the deal, he takes the last three cards for himself. (This is the original method, although some did not bother with it, merely dealing twenty-five cards to the opponent and twenty-eight to the dealer in rounds of five each, with eight for the dealer on the last round, and setting the remaining twenty-five cards aside.) The dealer discards three cards; he may not discard Kings or trumps.

#### *Declarations*

When the dealer has discarded, the two players make, in turn, any declarations which they wish, and are able, to make. The admissible declarations may be taken to be those of the second version (about 1800) of three-handed German Tarok, as described in the next chapter (game 4.2): in this case, the dealer declares first, and the declared cards are not shown. It is also possible that at an early stage the declarations were those of mid-XVIII-century German Taroc (3.1), in which case the dealer declares first, but the declared cards are shown to the opponent. It may further be that the declarations developed parallel to those in the three-handed game, so that some players used those given in 4.3; in this case the opponent declared first, and the declared cards had to be shown, save, perhaps, in a declaration of ten or more Taroks, for which it was necessary only to state whether or not the Pagat and the Scüs were included. The adoption of these

rules for declarations is especially likely when the variant system of scoring, up to 120 game points, was employed.

### *Play*

The opponent leads to the first trick, and the hands are played out under the usual rules. The cards rank in their original order. The Scüs serves as Excuse with exchange, but it is captured by the opponent if it is played to any of the last three tricks (or, according to NS (1840), to any of the last five).

### *Bonuses*

Either player scores 10 points for winning a trick containing a (genuine) King, or 15 points if this happens in the last trick. Either scores 15 points for winning a trick containing the Pagat, or 25 points if it is the last trick.

### *Scoring*

The payments for declarations and for bonuses are not made immediately; the points gained for them are merely recorded. At the end of the round, each player reckons up his points on cards won in tricks, counting them in *twos*, with standard values for the counting cards. These are added to the points gained from declarations and bonuses, and a running total is kept from hand to hand. The game ends with that hand in which either player attains 100 points, but the hand must be played out, and the winner is the player with the higher score at the end of that hand. There is a fixed payment for winning the game, which is doubled if the opponent has fewer than 50 points. In addition, the loser pays in proportion to difference between the players' scores. One text suggests that the fixed element of the payment for winning the game should be 25 times the value of a point, but others suggest a much higher ratio.

According to NS (1840), however, the target score is 120 points. At the end of the hand in which one or both players reach 120, the winner then scores 1 game point if the opponent has a score of 60 points or over, 2 game points if he has scored between 30 and 59 points, 3 game points if he has scored between 1

and 29 points, and 4 game points if he has scored nothing. In this case, there is no additional payment for the difference in points between the winner's and the loser's score.

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Classic Tarock was essentially a three-handed game, and adaptations of it for four players were uncommon. Dutch card-game books of 1821 and 1836 give only the Lombard/Viennese game (6.1), but the booklet of 1846 from which the account of the Dutch three-handed game (3.3) was taken gives also a transposition of this to a four-handed form.

### 3.6 Four-handed Dutch Tarok (XIX century)

There are four players in fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table. Deal and play are clockwise. The dealer gives nineteen cards to each, starting with the player on his left, in five rounds of three cards each and one of four. In the last round of the deal he gives himself the two remaining cards, and then discards two. After the dealer has discarded, each player in turn makes any declarations he can, as in the three-handed game, showing the cards he declares to the other players. One of the opponents pays the player who has made a given declaration; the other pays that player's partner. If any player makes a declaration of ten trumps or of nine trumps with the Excuse, he and his partner must together make 39 points on the cards they win in tricks; if they fail to do so, each must restore the 5 game points he was paid for the declaration. When the declarations are completed, the player to the left of the dealer leads to the first trick, and the hands are played out. Play is under the same rules as for the three-handed game: if a plain suit is led in which a player is void, that player need not play a trump if a trump has already been played to the trick when it is his turn to play. The bonuses and penalties are as in the three-handed game: one member of the side that is to pay pays one of the opponents, and his partner pays the other opponent. At the end of the hand, each side counts up the points they have won in tricks.

They score 1 point for every three cards, together with the points for scoring cards, as in the three-handed game; one odd low card counts nothing, and two odd low cards count 1 point, so there are still 78 points in total. Each member of the losing side pays one of the winners the difference between the two sides' point-totals. If, however, one side makes all the tricks, this is called *Reale*, and the payment is doubled to 156 game points (if the dealer's team loses every trick the dealer's discard is surrendered to the winners so the point difference is always 78).

---

In Germany, from the later eighteenth century down to the end of the nineteenth, most card-game books which mention four-handed games played with the 78-card pack describe only two forms, the Lombard/Viennese game (6.1) and Tarok Quadrille, a four-handed game without fixed partnerships which will be explained in Chapter 7. A very few, however, including the *Neustes Spielbuch* of 1840 already mentioned, give cursory accounts of a four-handed game in which the declarations and other features of the classic three-handed game are superimposed on the four-handed Lombard/Viennese game with fixed partnerships. The game itself was probably never very popular; *Der Meister in allen Kartenspielen* (Hamburg, 1810), which contains the first reference to the game, devotes no more than two sentences to it. In the *Neuster Spiel-Almanach* of Carl König, probably to be dated to the 1890s, the game is referred to as Tarok-Whist. We will adopt this convenient name, though it is based only on a faint analogy, the fact that the game was played by four players in fixed partnerships, a form of play going back to the very origins of Tarot and owing nothing to the spread of Whist from England to the Continent.

### 3.7 Tarok-Whist

There are four players in fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table. A 78-card French suited pack is used; the XXI is called the *Mongur*, the I

the *Pagat* and the Fool the *Skis*. Deal and play are *clockwise*. The dealer gives nineteen cards to each player, in three rounds of five each and one round of four; in the last round, he takes the last two cards for himself, and then discards two cards, which count for his side. He may not discard a King or a trump (but may discard the *Skis* if he wishes). When the dealer has discarded, he says '*Es liegt*', the player on his left makes any declarations he can, and then each of the other players in turn does the same. The possible declarations are those of the three-handed game 4.3, or, at least, this is what the card-game books say. It is difficult to believe, however, that there was not some adjustment made for the four-handed game: declarations of sixteen *Ladons* (suit cards other than court cards), or ten or more *Taroks* would be much rarer in a hand of 19 cards than of 25. It is possible that the number of trumps or *Ladons* required for a declaration was reduced in the four-handed game, but the books omitted to mention this. In any case, the maker of a declaration is paid individually by each of the other players, including his partner, the payments being made as soon as the round of declarations is completed.

The player to the dealer's left leads to the first trick, and the hands are played out according to the usual rules. The *Skis* serves as *Excuse*, with exchange, but if it is played in any of the last five tricks, it is captured by the winner of the trick. The suit cards rank in their original order. If a player wins the last trick with the *Pagat*, he and his partner are each paid 15 points by one of the opponents; Carl König recognises a similar bonus for winning the last trick with a King (but not for capturing one's partner's King with a trump). At the end of the hand the cards won in tricks by each side are counted in fours, the dealer's two discarded cards counting as a full set of four, with standard values for the counting cards, so that there are 72 points altogether. If either side has more than 36 points, they record the number of points they have over 36, and a cumulative total of these scores is kept from hand to hand. A *Partie* consists of four hands, each player dealing once, and a complete session consists of six *Partien* (24



hands): this can be either two Partien with each possible combination of partners or a "Partie ferme" comprising six Partien with the same partnerships. At the end of each Partie, the cumulative point totals of the two sides are compared and each member of the winning side is paid the difference by one of the losers. If this difference is 36 points or more, or if the losers have no points at all, the payment is doubled; if the losers have a zero score and the winners have a recorded score of 36 points or more, the payment is trebled. There is a sentence in *NS* (1840) which creates the impression that there is an additional payment at the end of the Partie for all the declarations made by the players during the Partie. König mentions no such extra payment, and perhaps *NS* simply intends that the payments for the declarations (and presumably for winning the last trick with the Pagat) are recorded at the time of the declaration rather than paid out immediately, and are to be settled up at the end of the Partie along with the payment for cards won.

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There was, however, one place where a four-handed classic game was popular, namely Munich. This game was played with an enlarged pack of 103 cards, formed by duplicating twenty-five of the cards in a 78-card French-suited pack; as there is no record of such a pack being manufactured, this was probably done by borrowing cards from a second pack with the same backs. The practice is first mentioned in the *KW* of 1756, and repeatedly referred to in later texts down to the first decade of the nineteenth century, when the references to it peter out. Unfortunately not one of these sources gives a detailed description of the game. According to the *KW*, the cards duplicated are the trumps from XIII to XXI, the Pagat, the Scüs and the whole of the Heart suit. This is confirmed by *HR* and by all the other card-game books that mention the game. K.A. Bierdimpfl, however, in the introduction to his catalogue, *Die Sammlung der Spielkarten des bayerischen Nationalmuseums*, published at Munich in 1884, says that the cards duplicated were all twenty-one trumps, the Sküs and the King,

Cavall and Ace of Hearts. Bierdimpfl is not a very trustworthy guide to the history of Tarot cards, and he uses the past tense, as referring to a vanished custom; on the other hand, he was a native of Munich, and so his testimony cannot be discounted. KW confirms that the game played with this pack was for four players, but says that the discard was of two cards, which can hardly be correct: we must surely assume that the dealer gave each player twenty-five cards and took the last three for himself, discarding three. KW then further adds, 'As we have been assured, the rules to be observed are almost exactly the same as is usual in the game of Tarock for four, which we shall set out below': this occurs towards the end of the section preceding the exposition of the Lombard/Viennese game. One would therefore deduce that the Munich game was played with fixed partnerships but without declarations or bonuses; but it is conceivable that KW has borrowed this remark from some earlier source in which it referred to some other four-handed game. But for this remark, we should be inclined to think that the game played in Munich with the 103-card pack was an adaptation of three-handed classic Tarot with declarations and bonuses, possibly one in which all four players played for themselves. A salient question concerning the manner of play is what happened when two cards of the same denomination were played to the same trick: the rule could be either that the one played earlier beat the other, or that the one played later beat the other. If the KW statement of the cards duplicated is correct, and it is assumed that the counting cards had their standard values and that the cards were counted in fours, with the dealer's three discarded cards counting as if they formed a full set of four, then there would have been exactly 100 points altogether; under the same assumptions, if Bierdimpfl's statement of the cards duplicated is preferred, there would be 96 points altogether. Unfortunately, the amount of information concerning this unusual game that has come down to us is too scanty to make it worth attempting to reconstruct the rules.



## CHAPTER 4

### Grosstarock

The classic three-handed game which had probably originated in France underwent an intensive development in Germany; it was the form that evolved there that spread to the Netherlands and Scandinavia, although there is no sign that the new ideas introduced in Germany were ever adopted in France. From about the middle of the XIX century the game came to be known in Germany as Grosstarock, to indicate that played with the full 78-card pack, then under challenge from the newer type of game, played with the 54-card pack; we shall use the name 'Grosstarock' here, although it is an anachronism for the period before 1850. It was not a new game, invented to replace the classic form described in Chapter 3, but evolved gradually out of it by the addition, in the period up to 1820, of new features, often adopted by some players and not by others. Probably at no time did the players of different regions, or even different circles, observe just the same rules. The 78-card pack continued to be manufactured in Germany by both Dondorf and Wüst of Frankfurt until at least the 1880s, and by Piatnik of Vienna until the present day; in his *Illustriertes Wiener Tarokbuch*, published in the 1890s, S. Ulmann stated that the 78-card pack was still in use in southern Bavaria. Grosstarock went on being played in Germany until 1914 or later, but had probably become extinct by the end of the First World War; in most of Austria it must have died out during the 1830s, though Ulmann reports that it was still played in the Tyrol at the end of the XIX

century. The only place where Grosstarock has survived to the present day is Denmark, where it continues to be played in a special form.

The earliest account of Grosstarock known to us is that given in the 1783 edition of *Das neue Königliche l'Hombre* (KH), published at Hamburg; this work, much of it translated from *Le royal jeu de l'hombre et du piquet* (Paris, many editions, late XVII century), first appeared in 1697 and went through numerous editions, all dealing with other card games besides Ombre. The KH account is a reprinting, with significant emendations, of that of KW (1756), cited in Chapter 3. An independent revision of the KW text is found in *Der beliebte Weltmensch, welcher lehret die üblichen Arten der Spiele* (BW), published in Vienna in 1795. The games described in these two works, called *Taroc al ordinaire* in BW, are substantially the same, save for the rules governing declarations, which differ considerably. The game remains essentially identical with the mature form of classic three-handed German Tarock described in Chapter 3. The salient new feature is little emphasised in either text. It is that if one player makes no tricks at all, each of the other two making at least one, the ordinary scores for points are cancelled, and the player with no tricks scores as if he had won all the points. This feat is usually called *Stichfreispiel*, but is also known as *Null*, *Nullstich* or, occasionally, *Misere*. A player with a weak hand was given a choice of objectives by this new rule; moreover, one attempting to win all the tricks had to take care, since his failure towards the end of play could easily result in just one player's taking no tricks. It is the presence of this feature which we take as distinguishing what we here call 'Grosstarock' from the earlier classic game; but it slipped in as a minor new variation.

Before describing game 4.1 we set out certain terminological conventions, to be observed throughout this chapter.

#### *Terminological conventions*

A declaration of 'Ten Taroks' may be made whenever a player has ten or more Taroks; he need not specify how many he has, and, if required to show them, may

show any ten. A declaration of 'Ten or more Taroks' means that a player may declare any definite number of Taroks from ten upwards; likewise for 'Three or more Kings', 'Three or more Matadors', etc. With any of these declarations, a notation such as '10 + 5 game points' means that the player is paid by each of the other two 10 game points for the basic number declared (ten Taroks or three Matadors, etc.) and 5 for each above that (thus 15 for eleven Taroks or four Matadors, 20 for twelve Taroks or five Matadors, etc.). 'Three or more Matadors (from above)' means that the first three Matadors are the Mongue (XXI), Pagat and Scüs, and the rest form an unbroken sequence of trumps from the XX down. 'With leaping Scüs' means that, in a declaration of Matadors, the Scüs may replace any *one* card other than the XXI or Pagat, provided that the card immediately below it is present; e.g. in this case the XXI, Pagat, Scüs and XIX will count as four Matadors, and the XXI, Pagat, Scüs, XX and XVIII five. When the phrase 'with leaping Scüs' is omitted, this rule does not apply. 'Matadors (from above or below)' means that trumps in an unbroken sequence from the II upwards may be included in a declaration of Matadors: thus the XXI, Pagat, Scüs, II and III would make five Matadors. When the player does not have to show the declared cards, he need not say whether the Matadors are from above or from below. It is presumably possible to combine Matadors from above and from below in a single declaration, e.g. the XXI, Pagat, Scüs, XX and II, but this is never made explicit. 'Matadors (from above or from below without the XXI)' means that the XXI is not required when the Matadors are from below only, allowing the Scüs, Pagat and II as a declaration of three Matadors. The rule, although often clearly stated in this way, is curiously asymmetric: the Pagat is always required for a declaration of Matadors from above, and so, by parity, one might expect the XXI to be required for a declaration of Matadors from below. 'Three or more Kings (out of seven)' means that the XXI, Pagat, and Scüs are counted as Kings, making, with the four natural Kings, seven Kings in all, and that any three of them may be declared; at least one player must be able to make

this declaration. Without the phrase 'out of seven', the word 'King' applies only to natural Kings. Unless otherwise specified, any one or more cards may be used for declarations of different types: thus the XXI, Pagat, and Scüs will warrant declarations both of three Kings (out of seven) and of three Matadors; likewise Matadors may be included in a declaration of ten Taroks. Declarations of the same type will be shown by a vertical line at the side; one cannot use the same cards for declarations of the same type, save that the Scüs may be used for half Cavallerie declarations in two or more suits.

The description of game 4.1 is based on BW and KH; but the section on declarations is divided into Austrian and German versions, as given by these two texts respectively. It is in KH that the innovations of the leaping Scüs and the seven Kings first appear, the latter said to be a recent addition to the rules; from it derived the occasional use of *Siebenkönigspiel* (game of seven Kings) as a name for the game.

#### 4.1 Three-handed Taroc (Germany and Austria, c. 1780-1800)

##### *Deal and discard*

A 78-card French-suited pack is used. The dealer gives 25 cards to each player, in five rounds of five cards each; in the last round, he gives all eight remaining cards to himself. He discards three cards to form the *Scat*, which counts to him at the end of play. He may always discard the Scüs if he wishes, but may not discard Kings; he may not discard a Taroc except when discarding either the Pagat and two other Tarocs or the Pagat, the Scüs and one other Taroc, provided in both cases that he leaves himself with no Taroc in his hand (but possibly the Scüs). KH expressly states that under this rule he may discard the Mongue (XXI). KH, but not BW, remarks that some, but not all, play that a deal is annulled if any player has only one or two Tarocs in his hand.

*Declarations: Austrian form*

BW states a rule not found in any other source: a declaration may be made in the course of play at any time up to the moment when a card of the set declared is first played. Distinct declarations may be made at different times, but one of 'Ten Tarocs' must be made before the player first plays a Taroc. The cards declared must be shown to the other players. Settlement is made as soon as a declaration is made: the dealer may not declare a card he has discarded. The permissible declarations are:

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Ten Tarocs (not including the Scüs)  | 10 game points     |
| A Cavalerie (all four court cards of one suit)                             | 10 game points     |
| A half Cavalerie ( <i>any</i> three court cards of one suit with the Scüs) | 5 game points      |
| All four Kings   | 10 game points     |
| Three Kings with the Scüs  | 5 game points      |
| Three or more Matadors (from above)  | 15 + 5 game points |

*Declarations: German form*

Declarations are made in turn, beginning with the dealer, as soon as he has made his discard, before a card has been led. Settlement is made between players as soon as all have had a chance to make declarations. The permissible declarations are:

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Ten Tarocs (not including the Scüs)  | 10 game points     |
| A Cavalerie (all four court cards of one suit)   | 10 game points     |
| A <i>scüsirte</i> Cavalerie (the King with any two other court cards of one suit and the Scüs) | 5 game points      |
| Three or more Kings (out of seven)   | 5 + 5 game points  |
| Three or more Matadors (from above)  | 10 + 5 game points |
| Three or more Matadors (from above, the Scüs leaping)  | 5 + 5 game points  |

Some players require that a player who has declared ten Tarocs but fails to make more than 26 points on the cards he wins in tricks must at the end of the hand



restore to the other two players what they paid him for the declaration. The rule about the leaping Scüs is stated ambiguously in KH: it could be read as saying that the Scüs may fill more than one gap, provided that each consists of a single card. This was certainly sometimes done, but was probably not intended by KH. KH also mentions Matadors from below as a recent innovation, but does not explain them.

### *Play*

Play is under the usual rules, and in the suits the cards rank in their original order. The Scüs serves as Excuse, with exchange: the exchange may not be made from the dealer's discard, but is otherwise made immediately or as soon as possible. BW states that if the one who played it makes no tricks, he must surrender it at the end of the hand to the one who won the trick to which it was played; KH says that he retains it and scores 4 points for it. The KH rule is probably a survival from the KW text (see 3.1), inappropriate when a *Stichfreispiel* is recognised.<sup>1</sup> The Scüs may not be played to the last three tricks; KH specifies that if the player who has the lead to the twenty-second trick has the Scüs, he must surrender the lead to the player on his right, and play the Scüs at his turn. Both texts agree that some, but not all, players allow the Scüs to be led to a trick, in which case the other players must play Tarocs if they can; KH states that this can be done only if at least one of the other players still has a Taroc. One is not required to play the Scüs if unable to follow suit or trump.

### *Bonuses and penalties*

A player who loses the Pagat to a higher Taroc pays 5 game points to *each* of the other players, or 10 if it happens in the last trick. One who wins the last trick

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<sup>1</sup> Another example of such a survival is this. The earlier stratum of KW gives as an example a bonus of 34 game points for declarations of ten Tarocs, three Matadors and a complete Cavalerie and winning the Pagat ultimo; this was when a Cavalerie earned only 4 game points. BW gives the same example with an amended value of 45 game points; but the sentence about 34 game points is carelessly repeated in KH, and reappears in many XIX-century accounts of Grosstarock, usually misinterpreted.

with the Pagat is paid 10 game points by each. Payment is made at once. Some players recognise a penalty of 4 (BW) or 5 (KH) game points to each for losing a King, or 10 if lost in the last trick, and a bonus of 10 game points from each for winning the last trick with a King. When these bonuses and penalties for Kings are recognised, there is a special bonus of 30 game points from each for winning the penultimate trick with the Pagat and the last trick with the Mongue (XXI). (In some later versions there was a bonus of 10 game points for winning the last trick with the XXI, but that probably did not apply in this game.)

### Scoring

The cards are counted in threes, using the standard valuation, so that there are 78 points *in toto*. A player who makes more than 26 points receives, in all, as many game points as he has points above 26; one who makes less than 26 points pays, in all, as many game points as he has points below 26. (If A makes 32 points, B 22 and C 24, B pays A 4 game points and C pays A 2; if A makes 30 points, B makes 28 and C 20, C pays A 4 game points and B 2.) If one player wins all the tricks, the dealer presumably surrenders his discard to him: he then makes all 78 points and is paid 26 game points by each of the other two. However, if just one player wins no tricks at all (the dealer's discard not counting as a trick), he is also paid 26 game points by each of the other two.

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The next independent account of Grosstarock first appeared, we believe, in the *Neuster Spielalmanach für das Jahr 1800* (NSa 1800) by Julius Cäsar, published in Berlin. This account was repeatedly reprinted.<sup>2</sup> The game had not undergone much change in the meantime, but there are some important divergences.

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<sup>2</sup> For instance in the *Neuestes Spielbuch* (Vienna, 1802), the *Berliner Almanach für Karten-, Schach- und Pharospieler auf das Jahr 1804* and the *Spielalmanach für Karten, Schach, etc.*, (SK) by Julius Cäsar (Berlin, 1815).

#### 4.2 Three-handed German Tarok (about 1800)

All is as in game 4.1, with the following exceptions.

##### *Deal and discard*

The variant rule that the deal is annulled if any player has only one or two Taroks is not mentioned. If the dealer has the Pagat and also has either just two other Taroks but not the Scüs or one other Tarok and the Scüs may discard all three, even if one is the XXI; he is entitled at the end of the hand to the bonus of 10 game points from each of the other two for bringing home the Pagat.

##### *Declarations*

The declared cards are not shown to the other players: only the type of declaration and the number of cards need be stated (but not, for instance, the suit of a Cavallerie or whether the Scüs is included when ten or more Taroks are declared); but a complete Cavallerie and a half Cavallerie with the Scüs must be distinguished. In NSa 1800 it is expressly stated that in a declaration of Taroks, one need not say whether the Pagat is included; but in the books of 1804 and 1815 a footnote adds that it is usual to say 'with' or 'without' to indicate the presence or absence of the Pagat. One who declares Taroks is paid whether or not he makes more than 26 points on his tricks. The permissible declarations are:

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| Ten or more Taroks (possibly including the Scüs)              | 10 game points     |
| A complete Cavallerie (all four court cards of one suit)      | 10 game points     |
| A complete Cavallerie with the Scüs                           | 20 game points     |
| A half Cavallerie ( <i>any</i> three court cards of one suit) | 5 game points      |
| A half Cavallerie with the Scüs                               | 10 game points     |
| Three or more Kings (out of seven)                            | 5 + 5 game points  |
| Three or more Matadors (from above)                           | 10 + 5 game points |

The Scüs may be used in more than one Cavallerie declaration. The leaping Scüs is not mentioned, but it is stated that some players allow a declaration of

Matadors from below, explained as being *without* the XXI, so that Pagat, Scüs and II make three Matadors.

### *Play*

The Scüs may legally be played to any of the last three tricks, but is then lost to the winner of the trick. No mention is made of leading the Scüs to a trick or of surrendering the lead to the next player. A curious rule is stated that, if the Pagat is captured, it (presumably with the whole trick) belongs to that one of the two opponents of the player who lost the Pagat who had the least score for declarations. The rule reappears, mostly in garbled form, in many later accounts, but was probably seldom observed.

### *Bonuses and penalties*

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Winning the last trick with the Pagat       | 20 game points from each opponent |
| Wining any other trick with the Pagat       | 10 game points from each opponent |
| Losing the Pagat in the last trick          | 20 game points to each opponent   |
| Losing the Pagat in any other trick         | 10 game points to each opponent   |
| Winning the last trick with a natural King  | 10 game points from each opponent |
| Winning any other trick with a natural King | 5 game points from each opponent  |
| Losing a natural King in the last trick     | 10 game points to each opponent   |
| Losing a natural King in any other trick    | 5 game points to each opponent    |

The penalties are evidently paid immediately, but the bonuses only at the end of the hand: if the Pagat or a King has been brought home, it is placed face up beside the player's tricks; each player then reckons 10 game points for the Pagat and 5 for each King, and, between each pair of players, the one with the lower total pays the difference. There is no bonus for winning the last trick with the XXI. Some players use an ultimo pot, into which each player puts a fixed amount at the beginning and whenever it is empty. A player winning the last trick with the Pagat takes the whole pot, one winning it with a King takes half the pot; one losing the Pagat in the last trick doubles the pot, one losing a King in the last trick increases it by a half.

*Scoring*

NSa 1800 treats the score for a *Stichfreispiel* as an optional rule, but in a few paragraphs added to the text of SK (1815) it is given as mandatory, the card-game books probably lagging behind practice as usual. Presumably one who makes no tricks surrenders the Scüs if he had it, and the dealer surrenders his discard to one who made all the tricks, but the text is silent on these matters.

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NSa 1800 opens by remarking that Tarok was formerly a simpler game, without seven Kings, Matadors from below or a *scüsirte* Cavallerie; the remark keeps cropping up in accounts of Tarok for the next 30 years. The book also states that Tarok is played in either a three- or a two-handed form – testimony to the low popularity of any four-handed form. The book gives much advice on strategy, regarding its whole interest as lying in bringing home or capturing the Pagat and the Kings; it goes so far as to say that once the Pagat and all the Kings are out, the rest of the hand is uninteresting. If there has been no declaration of Taroks, the players not having the Pagat will begin by playing Taroks in an attempt to capture it. One who has eight or nine Taroks in his hand will lead a low one on his first Tarok lead, and one with seven or fewer will lead a high one. They continue leading Taroks until either the Pagat has fallen or it is evident that it will not be captured. In the latter case, they lead a long suit, called a *Peitsche*, in the hope of forcing the Pagat out before the last trick. If a declaration of ten or more Taroks has been made, it is dangerous to attack the Pagat until you are sure it is not held by the one who made that declaration (here a requirement to say ‘with’ or ‘without’ is important). Once the Pagat has been played, the objective becomes to capture, or at least force out, the Kings; a player does better to force out the Kings he does not have before playing out his own. He will therefore repeatedly lead a suit whose King he does not hold, but will stop as soon as that suit is trumped. The player who holds the Pagat may play it as soon as he sees that the attack on it will succeed so as to avoid losing all his Taroks; but he will

hold it up as long as possible if he has two or more Kings, so as to postpone the attempt to force them out.

A quite new text appeared in the *Neuster Spielalmanach für Karten, Schach, etc.*, (NSK) by G. W. von Abenstein (Berlin, 1820), and was reprinted with small changes in the *Neustes Spiel-Taschenbuch* of T. F. Müller (Ulm, 1830) and the *Neustes Spielbuch* (NS) (Leipzig, 1840). This contained some important innovations. One is a declaration of four Queens, four Cavalls or four Jacks. Another is a declaration of sixteen or more Latons, a Laton or Ladon being a numeral card of a plain suit. This may compensate a player for being dealt a poor hand; the possibility of making a *Stichfreispiel* – the alternative compensation – may depend on the other players' not at first realising that that is your intention, to which they may be alerted by a declaration of Latons. These two new types of declaration were henceforward to be regular features of the game. Of greater importance was the introduction of announcements, at various stages of play, of an intention to make all the tricks or to make none, with an extra bonus for succeeding and a penalty for failing. Such announcements, made before the start of play, were to become a salient feature of later forms of Tarock.

### 4.3 Three-handed German Tarok (about 1820)

#### *Deal and discard*

Deal and play are *clockwise*. The dealer gives 25 cards to each player in five rounds of five each, and takes the last three cards for himself. The restrictions on the discard have changed. The dealer may never discard either Kings or the XXI. He may discard Taroks only if he discards all he has (hence only if he has three *or fewer*); these may include the Pagat but not the XXI. It is always allowable to discard the Skis. The deal is not annulled when some player has only one or two Taroks; it is not said that the dealer, by discarding the Pagat, scores the bonus for bringing it home.

### Declarations

When the dealer has discarded, he says "*Es liegt*" ("It lies"). The player to the dealer's left, not the dealer himself, then makes the first declaration, followed by the other two in turn. Declared cards must be shown to the other players. The only Kings are the four natural ones. The permissible declarations are:

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Ten or more Taroks (which may include the Skis)  | 10 + 5 game points |
| A complete Cavallerie (all four court cards of one suit)                               | 10 game points     |
| A half or <i>skisirte</i> Cavallerie (any three court cards of one suit with the Skis) | 5 game points      |
| A complete Königreich (all four Kings)   | 10 game points     |
| A half or <i>skisirtes</i> Königreich (three Kings with the Skis)                      | 5 game points      |
| Four Queens, four Cavalls or four Jacks  | 5 game points      |
| Four Queens, four Cavalls or four Jacks with the Skis                                  | 10 game points     |
| Three Queens, three Cavalls or three Jacks with the Skis                               | 5 game points      |
| Three or more Matadors (from above or below)   | 15 + 5 game points |
| Sixteen or more Latons (which may include the Skis)                                    | 10 + 5 game points |

The Skis may be used for more than one declaration. It has become a completely wild card, capable of substituting for a Tarok, for any court card or for a Laton; by means of it, one could declare *both* ten Taroks and sixteen Latons. It is given as a variant rule that one need not show declared Taroks: in this case one states their number, adding 'and the Skis' if one has it, and '*avec*' or '*sans*' to indicate whether they include the Pagat. No declaration is obligatory, but one may not declare fewer Taroks than one has; likewise for other declarations. A declaration of Taroks is paid irrespectively of the points gained in tricks. There are some complicated restrictions whose point is obscure. (a) If the eldest hand declares a complete Cavallerie, a later player may declare a half Cavallerie only if the missing card is the King or the Jack. (b) The eldest hand may declare three Queens, Cavalls or Jacks with the Skis only if he also has at least three Kings; the other two players may do so only if the eldest hand has not declared a complete

Königreich. Every declaration of Matadors must include the XXI, Pagat and Skis, even when they are from below. The leaping Skis is mentioned as a variant rule: it may replace just one Tarok (not the XXI or Pagat), and the declaration earns 5 game points for each card actually present. Players settle between each other as soon as the round of declarations is completed.

### Play

Play is under the usual rules, the suit cards ranking in the original order. The Skis serves as Excuse, but is captured by the winner of the trick if played to any of the last *five* tricks. It may be led to a trick so long as some other player holds at least one Tarok; the other players must then play Taroks if they can. It is expressly stated that a player with no Taroks left need not play the Skis when a suit is led in which he is void. One playing the Skis says "*Ich skisire mich*" (a mock-German rendering of "*Je m'excuse*").

### Bonuses and penalties

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| For winning the last trick with the Pagat  | 10 game points from each opponent |
| For winning any other trick with the Pagat | 5 game points from each opponent  |
| For losing the Pagat in the last trick     | 10 game points to each opponent   |
| For losing the Pagat in any other trick    | 5 game points to each opponent    |
| For winning <i>any</i> trick with a King   | 5 game points from each opponent  |
| For losing a King in <i>any</i> trick      | 5 game points to each opponent    |

There is no mention of an ultimo pot.

### Scoring

When the hand is over, each player counts his cards in threes, using the standard valuation. If each player has won at least one trick, and there have been no announcements, each player with points above 26 receives, in all, as many game points as he has points over 26, and each with points below 26 pays, in all, as many game points as he has points below 26. A player is *stichfrei* if he has made no tricks, each of the other two having made at least one; it is expressly stated that the dealer's discard does not count as a trick in this context, and that having had the Skis does not prevent one from being *stichfrei*. If no announcement has



been made, the points in tricks are ignored and each opponent pays 26 game points to the *stichfrei* player. If a player who is attempting to make a *Stichfreispiel* is forced to take a trick, and still has a court card or a Tarok in his hand, play continues and points are reckoned as usual. But if he does not have a court card or a Tarok in his hand, he has the choice between immediately throwing in his hand and continuing to play. If he throws in his hand before the 13th trick, points are reckoned on the tricks so far taken, including the *Scat*; he then pays to each opponent the amount of their point-totals on the tricks they have so far taken, less the points in the *Scat* if he was the dealer. If he is forced to take a trick later than the twelfth, and throws in his hand, he then pays to each opponent as many game points as that opponent has points remaining in his hand, together with the *Scat*, if the opponent was dealer. Winning all the tricks is called *Vole*: it is rewarded by 26 game points from each opponent (the Skis and the dealer's discard being tacitly surrendered to the winner).

### *Announcements*

A player may announce an intention of making a *Stichfreispiel*, either before the first trick, as soon as the declarations are concluded, or before the 13th trick. If he announced before the 13th trick, each opponent pays him 31 game points if he succeeded; if he failed, he must pay each 31 game points. If he announced before the first trick, then each opponent pays him 36 game points if he succeeds. If he takes one of the first twelve tricks, he pays each opponent 36 game points, but only 26 game points if he takes a trick later than the twelfth. An intention to make *Vole* can also be announced: before the first, before the 13th or before the 20th trick. If someone announces *Vole* before the 20th trick, he is paid 31 game points by each opponent if he succeeds; if he fails, he pays them 31 game points each, in addition to the regular settlement for points in tricks. For an announcement of *Vole* before the 13th or first trick, this amount is in each case increased to 38 or 52 game points respectively. A player who makes *Vole* and also wins the last trick with the Pagat is paid the bonus for the latter feat. But

when either *Vole* or *Stichfreispiel* is made, the bonus for bringing a King home and the penalty for losing one are *not* paid; presumably this also holds of other payments for the Pagat, though this is not stated. This rule is also said by NSK and NS to apply to an unsuccessful *Stichfreispiel* and to a *Vole* while not yet announced or defeated, but the rule appears unworkable: better to apply it to an *announced Stichfreispiel* or *Vole* until it has been defeated, and also when a player hoping to be *stichfrei* throws in his hand when forced to take a trick. (Payments for Kings should therefore be made only after the end of the hand.)

### *Variants*

In a brief appendix, NSK (1820) mentions two variant rules. (a) The bonus for bringing a King home, or penalty for losing one, is increased to 10 game points if it happens in the last trick; the bonus for bringing home the Pagat, or penalty for losing it, in the last trick is increased to 15 game points. (b) There are seven Kings -- the four natural ones and the XXI, Scüs and Pagat; the practice is said to be followed by many. There may then be a declaration of three or more Kings, with an unstated value (presumably the usual 5 + 5 game points). This probably supersedes the declaration of a natural Königreich, though this is not stated. When there are seven Kings, there is a bonus (presumably of 10 game points) for winning the last trick with the XXI. This appendix is omitted from the 1830 account but incorporated into the main text of NS (1840), with the remark that it is now usual to recognise seven Kings.

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It is evident that there is an intrinsic difficulty about combining bonuses for bringing home certain cards and penalties for losing them with a special score for making no tricks, and also with suspending these bonuses and penalties when a *Vole* is made: it could be advantageous for a player unnecessarily to lose one trick to one opponent and one to the other in order to avoid making *Vole* and so losing the bonuses (losing just one trick would make one of them *stichfrei*). The

problem of adjusting the rules to provide due incentives for difficult feats of play seems not to have been satisfactorily solved.

Versions 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 of Grosstarock do not show a steady development. In announcements of *Stichfreispiel* and of *Vole* and in the new declarations, 4.3 has evolved further; but, in requiring declared cards to be shown to the other players and Taroks to be played when the Skis is led, it resembles 4.1 more than 4.2. Experimentation with the game in different directions must have taken place simultaneously in different regions of Germany, though we cannot now tell in which. Version 4.2 marks the high point of an attempt to make the whole interest of the game centre round the Pagat and the Kings, though in modern Danish Tarok this has become even more important. The 1820 text, on the other hand, is the first account to discuss *Stichfreispiel* and *Vole* at length, which it does with much advice on strategy.

A plethora of card-game books was produced in Germany in the XIX century, and almost all of them include Tarok. Every later German description of Grosstarock can be assigned to one of three classes, according as it agrees in outline with the texts for versions 4.1, 4.2 or 4.3. Some simply reproduce the original text word for word, but others describe the game afresh, sometimes with minor variations. Some of these variations are evidently due to misunderstanding on the part of the writer, but others are probably genuine. Accounts deriving from the KH text of 1783 are few and early,<sup>3</sup> and probably represent a version of the game which, in so far as it differed from 4.2, was obsolete soon after 1800. The other texts might lead us to think that two distinct forms of the game persisted largely unchanged in different regions for many decades, tempting us to appropriate the name *Siebenkönigspiel*<sup>4</sup> for the 4.2 tradition, in which seven

<sup>3</sup> *Der Meister in allen Kartenspielen*, Hamburg and Altona, c. 1810; *Taschenbuch aller Karten-, Kegel-, Brett- und Würfel-Spiele*, Lüneburg, c. 1805; *Allgemeines Karten Spielbuch*, Vienna, 1846. The 1791 and 1797 editions of KH reprint the 1783 text.

<sup>4</sup> The name *Siebenkönigspiel* does not figure in any of the card-game books, but is given in the 1902 edition of Muret-Sanders English-German dictionary, s.v. 'tarot'.

Kings were almost always recognised, and restricting *Grosstarock* to the tradition of 4.3, in which they hardly ever were. This would give a false impression of two distinct games recognised as such. In fact, each description is presented simply as that of the standard form of three-handed Tarok, rather than of a special game with a name of its own. Doubtless it was played with countless local variations; we can no longer trace its development in the later XIX century.

#### *The tradition of 4.2*

We know of six books, apart from those already mentioned, whose descriptions of Tarok are close to the text of NSa 1800.<sup>5</sup> None shows any marked divergence in the rules. All recognise seven Kings, and none admits a leaping Scüs: three unconditionally allow Matadors from below (without the XXI) as well as from above, one allows them from below as an option, and two allow them only from above. Two, of 1894 and 1900, agree on an odd variation on the usual score of 10 + 5 game points for declaring ten or more Taroks, namely 10 game points for ten Taroks, 15 for eleven, 20 for twelve and 26 + 5 for thirteen or more.

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#### *The tradition of 4.3*

We know of eight other books whose descriptions of Tarok are close to the text of NSK.<sup>6</sup> Here there is considerably more variation. Three allow Matadors from above and below (always with the XXI), and three allow them only from above; one admits a leaping Scüs, three give it as an option, and one leaves it

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<sup>5</sup> F. von Posert, *Zwei und siebenzig deutsche, französische und englische Kartenspiele*, Quedlinburg and Leipzig, 1864; idem., *Deutsche, französische und englische Kartenspiele*, 3rd edn., Quedlinburg and Leipzig, 1873; *Illustriertes Allgemeines Familien-Spielbuch*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1882; Alban von Hahn, *Das Buch der Spiele*, 1894; Ernst Langa, *Das grosse Buch der Kartenspiele*, Berlin, 1900; F. von Posert, *Deutsche, französische und englische Kartenspiele*, 9th edn., Leipzig, 1901.

<sup>6</sup> C. von Alvensleben, *Encyclopädie der Spiele*, 2nd. edn., Leipzig, 1855; Baron F. von Thalberg, *Der perfecte Kartenspieler*, Berlin, c. 1875; Friedrich Anton, *Encyclopädie der Spiele*, 5th. edn., Leipzig, 1889; S. Ulmann, *Illustriertes Wiener Tarokbuch*, Vienna, c. 1892; idem., *Das Buch der Familienspiele*, Vienna, c. 1894; Carl König, *Neuster Spiel-Almanach*, Berlin, c. 1892; Albert Stabenow, *Ausgewählte Kartenspiele*, Leipzig, 1908.

unmentioned. Most require all declared cards to be shown, except for ten or more Taroks. When Taroks are declared, all require it to be stated whether or not the Scüs is included; three require the declarer to say '*avec*' or '*sans*' to indicate the presence or absence of the Pagat, two say that some require this, and one leaves it unmentioned. Further variations are as follows:

(a) Thalberg, writing probably in the 1870s, for the most part reproduces word for word the text of NS (1840), but gives a variant score of  $10 + 3$  game points for declarations of ten or more Taroks and of sixteen or more Ladons.

(b) Carl König, writing probably in the 1890s, says that many players take the red suits as ranking in the same order as the black ones (with Ace as the lowest card). He allows Matadors only from above, and does not admit a leaping Scüs. He awards  $10 + 5$  game points for three or more Matadors, rather than  $15 + 5$ . He does not recognise seven Kings, and does not require the presence of the Scüs in a half Königreich or half Cavallerie: the former consists for him of any three natural Kings and the latter of any three court cards of one suit, both earning 5 game points.

(c) Ulmann, also writing in the 1890s, gives the variant value of  $16 + 5$  game points for sixteen or more Ladons. His schedule of bonuses for bringing home the XXI, the Pagat or a natural King, and of penalties for losing one, is 5 game points for the Pagat or a King before the last trick, 15 for the Pagat in the last trick and 10 for a King or the XXI in the last trick.

(d) Stabenow, writing in 1908, gives the bonuses and penalties for Pagat and Kings as in game 4.2, i.e. 10 game points for the Pagat before the last trick, and 20 in the last, and 5 game points for a King before the last trick, and 10 in the last. He cites the same variant value for ten or more Taroks as given under the 5.2 tradition, namely  $10 + 5$  game points for from ten to twelve Taroks, and  $26 + 5$  for thirteen or more. He is the only writer in the 4.3 tradition to recognise seven Kings, at their usual rate of  $5 + 5$  game points for three or more. Three or more

Matadors score 10 + 5 game points (the first three can also be declared as Kings). Matadors are only from above, and there is no leaping Scüs. Stabenow is also unique in recognising seven Kings *and* allowing an additional declaration of a natural Königreich (for the usual 10 game points) or a half Königreich with the Scüs (for the usual 5 game points). He allows 10 game points for winning the last trick with the *Mond* (XXI).

### Terminology

The spelling *Tarok* is usual throughout the XIX century; save for one appearance in 1810 and one in 1840, *Tarock* is not used before 1894. The name *Gross-Tarok* for the game first appears in Carl König's work of 1892, but probably originated earlier. The XXI is often called *der Mond*, sometimes *der Mongur* and sometimes just the XXI. The I is always *der Pagat*. The Fool is called *der Scüs*, *der Skis* or *der Skys*. Numeral cards of the suits are called *Ladons* or *Latons*, or occasionally, at the end of the century, *Scartins*. The discard is usually *der Scat*. A slam is called *Vole*, *Allstich* or *Tout*.

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As already remarked, Grosstarock probably died out in Germany by the end of the First World War. The game was also played in the Netherlands and Denmark. In Chapter 3 we noted a mid-XIX-century Dutch form of the classic game, without a score for making no tricks. That the game had not developed as rapidly in the Netherlands as in Germany is corroborated by an account found in two card-game books published in Amsterdam, *Het Kaartspelen Gemakkelijk Gemaakt* (KG) (1821) and *Nieuwe Beschrijving der Meest Gebruikelijke Kaartspellen* (NB) (1836). The game is antiquated, though it has a score for making no tricks; the account is largely a translation of that in KH (1783).

#### 4.4 Three-handed Dutch Tarok (first half of the XIX century)

##### *Terminology*

Trumps are called *Taroks*. The XXI is called *Mongue*, the I is called *Pagato* (KG) or *Pagat* (NB) and the Fool *Scus* (KG) or *Skus* (NB): these three cards are called collectively *Honneurs*.

##### *Rules of play*

All is as in 4.1 (German version), with the following exceptions. In the black suits the cards rank as in the red ones, that is, with 10s as the lowest of the suit. It is optional to allow a leaping *Skus* and to recognise seven Kings; there is no declaration of Kings if seven Kings are not recognised. As in KH, Matadors from below are mentioned as an option, but not explained. If it is chosen to award 10 game points bonus or penalty for a King in the last trick, and 5 in any other trick, then, as in KH, 30 game points are awarded for winning the last two tricks with the *Mongue* and the *Pagat*; but whereas, in KH, the *Pagat* had to be played to the penultimate trick, in KG they may be played in either order, and in NB the *Pagat* must be played last.

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The game was considerably more developed in Denmark, where 78-card French-suited packs were manufactured until 1939 or later. Of four XIX-century Danish accounts we have seen, the earliest is *Anviisning til at Spille L'Hombre, Whist, Boston og Tarock* by Sp. M. Basta (Copenhagen, 1846). On it is based 4.5.

#### 4.5 Danish Tarock (mid-XIX century)

##### *Terminology*

Trumps are called *Tarockker*, the XXI the *Monyue* or more usually the 21, the I is called the *Pagat* and the Fool the *Scues* or *Excuse*. The discard is called the *Scatt*.

*Deal and discard*

There are three players; a 78-card French-suited pack is used. Deal and play are *clockwise*. The dealer gives 25 cards to each player, in five rounds of five each; he takes the last three cards for himself and discards three, which count to him at the end of the hand. He may never discard Kings or the XXI. If he has the Pagat and just two other Tarockker, not including the XXI, or the Pagat, just one other Tarock (not the XXI) and the Scues, he may discard these three cards if he wishes; in no other case may he discard a Tarock. It is always lawful to discard the Scues.

*Declarations*

When the dealer has discarded, declarations are made in turn. Declared cards must be shown to the other players. The permissible declarations are:

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Ten or more Tarockker  | 10 + 5 game points |
| A Cavallerie (all four court cards of one suit)  | 10 game points     |
| A half or <i>scueseret</i> Cavallerie (any three court cards of one suit and the Scüs) | 5 game points      |
| All four Kings   | 10 game points     |
| All four Kings with the Scues  | 20 game points     |
| Three (natural) Kings with the Scues   | 5 game points      |
| Three or more Matadors (from above)  | 10 + 5 game points |

The score for any declaration is paid by each of the other two players.

*Play*

When the declarations are over, play begins according to the usual rules. (In the suits, the numeral cards rank in their original order.) The Scues serves as Excuse, and an empty card is exchanged for it as soon as possible, but it is lost if played to any of the last three tricks. The Scues may be led to a trick; the player leading it names any suit, either Tarockker or a plain suit, and the other players must play a card of that suit if they can. Presumably this may be done only when at least one player has a card of the suit named.



*Bonuses and penalties*

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| For winning the last trick with the Pagat  | 15 game points from each opponent |
| For winning any other trick with the Pagat | 5 game points from each opponent  |
| For losing the Pagat in the last trick     | 15 game points to each opponent   |
| For losing the Pagat in any other trick    | 5 game points to each opponent    |
| For winning the last trick with a King     | 10 game points from each opponent |
| For losing a King in the last trick        | 10 game points to each opponent   |
| For losing a King in any other trick       | 5 game points to each opponent    |

A variant valuation is 30 game points as bonus or penalty for a King ultimo, and 40 for a Pagat ultimo.

*Scoring*

Cards won in tricks are counted in threes, with the standard valuation. Each player receives, in all, as many game points as he has points in excess of 26, or pays, in all, as many game points as he has points below 26. However, if a player has made a *Misère* (won no trick), he is paid 26 game points by each of the other two; points on cards no longer signify, but bonuses and penalties for Pagat and King still apply. (It is tacitly assumed that only one player can make *Misère* in the same hand.) A new variation is for each opponent to pay 52 game points to a player making *Misère*, and to make no payment when this occurs for Pagat or King ultimo. This variant value may be allied to the higher values for Pagat and King ultimo when no *Misère* is made, but this is not expressly stated.

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Game 4.5 is intermediate between 4.2 and 4.3: the seven Kings are not recognised, as in 4.2, and the announcements of *Misère* and slam characteristic of 4.3 are missing. The text contains some advice on tactics, and pays equal attention to *Misère* and ultimo. But the variants point to a development in a new direction. The *Ny og fuldstændig dansk Spillebog* by Martin Schwartz (Copenhagen, 1847) and the *Nyeste Dansk Spillebog* by S. A. Jorgensen (Copenhagen, 1868) also have sections on Taroc; but these are merely translations from German sources, with some mistakes suggesting that the authors were not personally acquainted with the game. The account of the three-handed

game is taken from the 1800 text for 4.2; the section also includes the four-handed Viennese/Lombard game and the two-handed game described in Chapter 3, as well as Tarok l'Hombre and Tarok-Quadrille, described in a later chapter. Perhaps all these forms were known in Denmark in the XIX century; but perhaps not. A very well-informed account, dealing only with the three-handed game, is given in a short, anonymous undated book called simply *Tarok*; it cites the German name *Gross-Tarok* for the game, and is probably to be dated to the 1870s or 1880s. This work is of great interest as being the only one known to us that attempts a comprehensive survey of all the variant rules of the game. Despite occasional allusions to modes of play current in Germany, the survey is restricted to Denmark, with many remarks of the form "In some places they play ..."; it thus testifies to the widespread popularity of the game in Denmark at the time, and, as always with Tarot games, the very local character of the various modes of play.

#### 4.6 Danish Tarok (late XIX century)

##### *Terminology*

Trumps are called *Tarokker*, the XXI is called *Mondo*, the I *Pagat* and the Fool *Scus*. The discard is called the *Scat*.

##### *Deal and discard*

There are three players; a 78-card French-suited pack is used. Deal and play are anti-clockwise. The dealer gives 25 cards to each player, in five rounds of five each; he takes the last three cards for himself and discards three, which count to him at the end of the hand. He may never discard Kings or the Mondo. He may not normally discard the Scus, but may do so if he aims to make a slam. (This rule could obviously not be very strictly enforced, but would not need to be.) The other players are entitled to ask whether he has discarded Tarokker, and, if so, how many.

*Variant rule on discard*

The dealer may discard Tarokker only if he has the Pagat and exactly two others, not including the Mondo, and discards all three.

*Declarations*

After discarding, the *dealer* begins the round of declarations, the others following in turn. The permissible declarations are:

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| Ten or more Tarokker (possibly including the Scus)                  | 10 game points     |
| A Cavallerie (all four court cards of one suit)                     | 10 game points     |
| A half Cavallerie (any three court cards of one suit with the Scus) | 5 game points      |
| All four Kings  | 10 game points     |
| Three Kings with the Scus   | 5 game points      |
| Three or more Matadors (from above)                                 | 10 + 5 game points |

When Tarokker are declared, they must be shown to the other players. Other declared cards need not be shown, but the effect is the same, since the suit of a Cavallerie must be stated and the missing card named when a half Cavallerie is declared; likewise, the missing King must be named when three Kings and the Scus are declared. A player is paid the value of a declaration by each of the other two players.

*Variant rules on declarations*

(a) When ten or more Tarokker are declared, they need not be shown, but it must be stated whether the Pagat or the Scus is included. This variant rule is frequently observed.

(b) Matadors may be reckoned from below, without the Mondo, as well as from above; the Pagat, Scus and II form the first three Matadors from below. One may combine Matadors from below and from above (these probably constitute only a single declaration, not two, though this is not quite clear).

- (c) A leaping Scus may be used in Matador declarations to fill more than one gap, provided they are not consecutive and the last member of the sequence is actually present. One scores for each card replaced by the Scus; the example given is Pagat, Scus, Mondo, XIX, XVII, XV, forming *nine* Matadors.
- (d) To the Cavallerie declarations is added that of a 'full' Cavallerie, namely all four court cards of one suit with the Scus, with a value of 15 game points.
- (e) The following system is used for Cavallerie declarations:
- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| A complete Cavallerie (all four court cards of one suit) | 10 game points |
| A complete Cavallerie with the Scus                      | 20 game points |
| A half Cavallerie (any three court cards of one suit)    | 5 game points  |
| A half Cavallerie with the Scus                          | 10 game points |
- (f) If a previous player has declared a complete Cavallerie, a subsequent player may declare a half Cavallerie only if the missing card is either the King or the Jack.
- (g) A declaration of a half Cavallerie is allowed only to a player holding at least three Kings.
- (h) One need not state the suit of a Cavallerie, the missing card of a half Cavallerie or the missing King in a declaration of three Kings with the Scus.
- (i) To the declarations of Kings is added that of four Kings with the Scus, valued at 15 game points.
- (j) Seven Kings are recognised. A declaration of three or more Kings, valued at 5 + 5 game points, replaces the usual declarations of Kings.
- (k) One may make a declaration of four Queens, four *Cavaller* or four Jacks, valued at 5 game points, or of any of these with the Scus, valued at 10 game points.
- (l) One may declare sixteen or more Ladons, which may include the Scus, with a value of 10 + 5 game points.

*Play*

The player to the dealer's right leads to the first trick, and play proceeds according to the usual rules. The Scus serves as Excuse. An empty card is given in exchange for it from cards won in tricks (not from the Scat); it is not stated that one may do this later if one cannot do it at once, but this is probably so. The Scus may be led to a trick: the player names a suit, either Tarokker or a plain suit, which the other players must follow if they can; the Scus is then as usual taken back and an empty card exchanged for it. It is expressly stated that a suit must be chosen in which there are still some cards in the other players' hands; presumably it is enough that there be a card of the suit in the hand of *one* of the players, though this is not made clear. If the player leading the Scus names a suit in which both the other players are void, the player to his right is entitled to name the suit instead. The Scus is lost if played to either of the last *two* tricks.

*Variant rule on the Scus*

The Scus is lost if played to any of the last *three* tricks. This rule is expressly said to be observed by some Danish players. It is stated that in Germany the usual rule is that the Scus is lost if played to any of the last *four* tricks, but there is no confirmation of this from any German source.

*Bonuses and penalties*

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| For winning the last trick with the Pagat  | 15 game points from each opponent |
| For winning any other trick with the Pagat | 5 game points from each opponent  |
| For losing the Pagat in the last trick     | 15 game points to each opponent   |
| For losing the Pagat in any other trick    | 5 game points to each opponent    |
| For winning the last trick with a King     | 10 game points from each opponent |
| For losing a King in the last trick        | 10 game points to each opponent   |
| For losing a King in any other trick       | 5 game points to each opponent    |

There is no bonus for winning a trick before the last with a King, unless one wins both the last two tricks with Kings, in which case one is paid 15 game points in all by each of the opponents, or each of the last three tricks with Kings, when one is paid 20 game points in all by each of the opponents. If the Pagat and all four Kings have been played before the last trick, the winner of the last trick is paid 5

game points by each of his opponents. There are two ultimo pots: one for Pagat ultimo and one for King ultimo. Before play begins each player puts 20 game points into the Pagat pot and 5 into the King pot; they replenish each pot by the same amount whenever it is emptied. Before each deal, the dealer puts 5 game points into each pot. A player winning the last trick with the Pagat takes the contents of the Pagat pot, and one winning the last trick with a King takes the contents of the King pot; one losing the Pagat in the last trick doubles the contents of the Pagat pot, and one losing a King in the last trick doubles the contents of the King pot; one losing the Pagat in a trick before the last pays 5 game points to the Pagat pot.

*Variant rule on ultimo*

There are no ultimo pots, but the bonus or penalty for Pagat ultimo is increased to 30 game points from or to each opponent, and that for King ultimo to 25 game points.

*Scoring and announcements*

Cards won in tricks are counted in threes, with the standard valuation. If all have won some tricks, each player receives, in all, as many game points as he has points in excess of 26, or pays, in all, as many game points as he has points below 26.

*Nolo*: However, if a player has made a *Nolo* (has won no trick, each of the other two having made at least one), but has made no announcement, he is paid 26 game points by each opponent. Of the other two players, one who has less than 39 points pays the other as many game points as he has points below 39. The bonus or penalty for Pagat or King ultimo remains in force, but only between the opponents of the player making *Nolo*, one paying the other 15 or 10 game points.

*Nolo* may be announced before the first or the 13th trick. If a player announcing *Nolo* succeeds, each opponent pays him 36 game points if he announced before the first trick, and 31 if before the 13th; the two opponents settle between themselves for points in tricks and Pagat or King ultimo. If the announcer of a

*Nolo* fails, he pays each opponent 10 game points he announced before the first trick, and 5 if before the 13th; in addition, the three players settle among themselves for points in tricks and for bonuses and penalties for the Pagat and Kings. When there are ultimo pots, a further premium, additional to those just stated, is usually paid for *Nolo*. For a successful unannounced *Nolo*, each opponent pays an additional 15 game points; if one was announced before the 13th trick, the *Nolo* player receives an additional 25 game points from each if he succeeds, and pays 25 game points to each if he fails; when the announcement was made before the first trick, this becomes 50 game points.

*Volo*: Many players admit announcements of *Volo* or *Tout* (winning all the tricks) before the first, the 13th or the 20th trick. An unannounced *Volo* earns, as usual, 26 game points from each opponent. One announced before the first trick earns 52 game points from each if it succeeds; before the 13th trick, 38 game points, before the 20th 31. If a player announces *Volo* and fails, he pays the same amounts to each opponent; settlement is also made for points in tricks in the usual way. If there are ultimo pots, a player who makes *Volo*, whether announced or not, takes the contents of both pots in addition to the foregoing payment. If there are no ultimo pots, it is usual to attach a high additional premium to *Volo*.

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The picture given in this small book, of a game played with numerous local variations, serves as a corrective to the probably misleading impression given by the German card-game books of two distinct traditions.

It is in Denmark that Grosstarock, long vanished from the Netherlands and from its native Germany, has survived to the present day. Tarok has been played in that country throughout the XX century, although the number of players is now quite small. Authorities on the modern game are: Emil Wolff, *Tarok*, Copenhagen, 1899; Oberstløjtnant R. L. Borch, *Tarok: En vejledning I Spillets Regler og Anvendelse*, 1924, repr. 1959 by Tarokklubben af 1959; J. V. V. Hermansen, *Tarok: Vejledning og Regler for Spillet*, Copenhagen, 1926, and

*Tarok*, 1943; and H. J. Møller, *Tarok: En vejledning I det ædle kortspil*, Copenhagen, 1988. We have also benefited from descriptions by Poul Jensen and Jens Brix Christiansen. Wolff's book of 1899 records a great many variations as observed in different places. By the 1920s, however, only the principal version given by Wolff is described: the game had attained a standardised form. In this, there are no announcements of Nolo or of Tout; the advantage of a Nolo has been reduced, but it remains very important as a means of thwarting another player's attempt to make an ultimo. Sometimes two players collaborate in obtaining a Nolo for one of them if the third threatens to make an ultimo, because it is cheaper to lose to a Nolo than to an ultimo. Almost all the interest of the game is concentrated on the last trick – achieving or preventing a Pagat ultimo or King ultimo.

#### 4.7 Danish Tarok (XX century)

##### *Terminology*

Trumps are called *tarokker* (sing. *tarok*). The 1 is the *Pagat* and the 21 the *Mondo*. The Fool is the *Skis* or *Scus*. The King, Queen, Knight and Jack are *Konge*, *Dame*, *Kaval*, and *Knægt*, collectively *honnører*. Numeral cards of the suits are *ladoner*. The discard is the *skat*. Losing the Pagat or a King in the last trick is called *bagud*. Making all the tricks is *Tout* and making none is *Nolo*.

##### *Deal and discard*

As in game 5.6, there are three players; a 78-card French-suited pack is used, nowadays one of French manufacture, with Arabic numerals on the trumps; deal and play are anti-clockwise. Sometimes four take part in a game, in which case the player sitting opposite the dealer receives no cards and takes no part in the play of a hand. The dealer gives 25 cards to each active player, in five rounds of five each; he takes the last three cards for himself and discards three, which count to him at the end of the hand. He may never discard Kings or the Mondo. He may not normally discard the Scus, but may do so if he aims to make Tout; in this



case he must state that he has discarded it. This is understood as announcing an intention to make Tout, but carries with it no extra bonus for doing so or penalty for failing to do so. The dealer may discard Tarokker only if he has three or fewer of them, which may include the Pagat but not the Mondo, and discards all of them; the Scus does not count for this purpose as a Tarok. He may not discard any card from a set he could otherwise declare, save in the rare case that he cannot avoid doing so, in which case he must state which cards he is discarding; in this case he still scores for the declarations he could have made. A player who has received no Tarokker may demand a redeal by the same dealer; again, the Scus does not here count as a Tarok.

### *Declarations*

After discarding, the *dealer* begins the round of declarations, the others following in turn. It is obligatory to make any declarations that one can. These are paid for immediately, normally by means of tokens, which are used in preference to keeping the score on paper. The following declarations are recognised:

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Ten or more Tarokker (possibly including the Scus)   | 10 game points     |
| A full Kavaleri (all four court cards of one suit)   | 10 game points     |
| An abundant ( <i>sprøjtefuld</i> ) Kavaleri (all four court cards of one suit with the Scus) | 15 game points     |
| A half Kavaleri (any three court cards of one suit with the Scus)                            | 5 game points      |
| Full Kings (all four)  | 10 game points     |
| Abundant ( <i>sprøjtefuld</i> ) Kings (all four with the Scus)                               | 15 game points     |
| Half Kings (three Kings with the Scus)   | 5 game points      |
| Three or more Matadors (from above)  | 10 + 5 game points |

One who declares Tarokker must say whether they are 'with' or 'without' the Pagat, but need not say whether the Scus is included. The suit of a Kavaleri must be stated, and which card of a half Kavaleri or of half Kings is missing.

*Play*

The hands are played out according to the usual rules. The suit cards rank in their original order, and the Scus serves as Excuse. If played to any trick up to and including the 23rd, the Scus is taken back. It was formerly the custom to give an empty card in exchange for it (not from the skat), but now, since points are counted according to the original method, that is no longer necessary. The Scus may be led to a trick, the player naming a plain suit or Tarokker, to which the others must follow if they can; but he pays a penalty of 20 game points to each pot (see under *Scoring*) if the other two players are both void in the suit named. In this latter case, the second player has the right to rename the suit, or, if he does not do so, the third player renames it, the second player taking the card he played back into his hand and substituting another; but the second player may safeguard his right to rename the suit by saying, "I cannot follow suit", when, if the third player also cannot follow, the second player nominates a suit. The Scus may never be played to the 24th (penultimate) trick; if it is played to the last trick, it is lost to the winner of the trick, and, if it is led to the last trick, the second player acquires the right to name the suit. At the 23rd trick, the player with the lead may demand that the Scus be played to that trick. If he does not, the second player may make the demand; if the player with the lead had the Scus, he must substitute it for the card he played, and the second player then names the suit of the trick; if neither of the first two players demands the Scus, the third player may demand it and names the suit, the other players taking back the cards they played if necessary. To demand the Scus when it has already been played incurs a penalty of 20 game points to each pot.

*Bonuses and penalties*

There are two pots, one for the Pagat and one for Kings: either the Pagat pot is labelled with a figure 1 and the King pot with a crown, or a dish and bowl may be used for these respectively. Before play begins, each player, including the player currently sitting out if there are four players, contributes 20 game points to each

pot; either pot is replenished similarly whenever it is empty. Before each deal, the dealer contributes 5 game points to each pot. A player winning any trick before the last with the Pagat receives 5 game points from each of the other two; one who loses the Pagat in any trick before the last pays 5 game points to each of the other two, and puts 5 game points in the Pagat pot. One who loses a King in any trick before the last pays 5 game points to each of the other two, and puts 5 game points in the King pot. All these payments are immediate. A player who wins the last trick with the Pagat receives 45 game points from each of the other two and takes the contents of the Pagat pot. One who wins the last trick with a King receives 40 game points from each of the other two and takes the contents of the King pot. One who loses the Pagat in the last trick pays 45 game points to each of the other two and doubles the contents of the Pagat pot. One who loses a King in the last trick pays 40 game points to each of the other two and doubles the contents of the King pot. If a player makes King ultimo, and another player plays a King to the last trick, the latter doubles the contents of the King pot before the winner of the ultimo takes them. If the last trick contains neither the Pagat nor a King, the player who wins it receives 20 game points from each of the other two.

### *Scoring for cards*

The cards are counted according to the original method (4 points for Kings, Mondo, etc., and 1 point for each trick, including the skat). Each player receives, in all, as many game points as he has points above 26, or pays, in all, as many game points as he has points below 26, provided that each has won at least one trick. If just one player wins no tricks, he has made Nolo, and receives 26 game points from each of the other two, who make no payment between themselves when a Nolo is made; there is no bonus for an ultimo or for winning the last trick, although payments for bringing home or losing the Pagat and for losing a King before the last trick remain in force. If a player makes Tout, he scores as if he had

made both Pagat and King ultimo: the other two each pay him 85 game points, and he takes the contents of both pots. There are no other payments.

*Variants given by Wolff*

- (a) Some players allow the Scus to be taken back only up to the 22nd trick; Wolff states that in Germany it may be taken back only if played no later than the 21st trick.
  - (b) If the Scus has not been played before the 23rd trick, it is unconditionally necessary to play it to that trick.
  - (c) The winner of the last trick containing neither the Pagat nor a King receives only 10 game points from each of the other two.
  - (d) There are no ultimo pots, and the values of Pagat and King ultimo are set at only 15 and 10 game points respectively, won or lost.
  - (e) If by the 23rd trick just one player has made no tricks, no demand may be made that the Scus be played.
  - (f) If a Nolo is made, the usual penalty for losing the Pagat or a King in the last trick remains in force; Wolff mentions with disapproval the practice of exempting the Nolo player from this penalty. He remarks that formerly Nolo was the highest-scoring game after Tout, but that, with the introduction of ultimo pots and high premiums for ultimo, this is no longer so. He mentions the former practice of announcing Nolo, with an extra bonus if successful, but says that it has quite gone out of use. He states that a player making an unannounced Nolo formerly received the same bonus as for an ultimo in addition to the 26 game points, but now is paid only the flat rate of 26 game points.
  - (g) Wolff mentions almost all the variant declarations familiar from earlier sources.
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## CHAPTER 5

### Swiss Tarot, Troggen or Troccas

We have seen that Tarot cards first reached Switzerland in the XVI century. The first Swiss reference to the game is in an ordinance of 1572 and there are further mentions in the late XVI and throughout the XVII century<sup>1</sup>. If the game of Tarot reached Switzerland direct from Italy, the most likely date for it to have done so is in the period when the Swiss were involved with the wars for the control of Milan, up to their defeat by Francis I at Marignano in 1515. A version of Tarot included in the *Maison académique* of 1659 has already been described (2.5). In the catalogue *Schweizer Spielkarten* to the exhibition of Swiss playing cards held in Zurich in 1978, Dr Balz Eberhard observes that in the XVIII century Tarot was played in every part of the country, and from the XVIII century on, many Tarot packs were made in Switzerland. The mainly Protestant French-speaking cantons used cards of the Tarot de Marseille pattern, or slight variations on it, but in the German-speaking cantons, particularly the Catholic ones, the Tarot de Besançon was used instead. This standard pattern is so called because it was produced by various cardmakers of Besançon at around the beginning of the XIX century, but there is no reason to suppose that it originated there; an early example is that

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<sup>1</sup> Peter F Kopp, 'Das Tarockspiel in der Schweiz', *The Playing-Card*, Vol. XII, Nos 1&2, 1983; his source is the *Schweizerdeutsches Wörterbuch*, Vol. XIV, Frauenfeld, 1978, s.v. Trogge<sup>n</sup> and trogge(n), coll. 676-9. The ordinance is one permitting the playing of the game; this is repeated in ordinances of 1588, 1593, 1599, 1620, 1627, 1650, 1662 and into the XVIII century, the last being in 1741. See the *Schweizerdeutsches Wörterbuch* and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, Vol. XI, p.1.

made in *c.* 1725 by François Héri of Solothurn.<sup>2</sup> The Tarot de Besançon is a variant of the Tarot de Marseille, with Italian suits and inscriptions on the court cards and trumps giving their names in French. Its most characteristic feature is that the Pope and Popess, which gave offence to Catholics in many areas, are replaced on trumps V and II by Jupiter and Juno respectively.

During the second half of the XVIII century, the French-suited Tarot pack displaced the Italian-suited one in Belgium and Germany, though in France it did not make its appearance until the mid XIX century. In about 1780, many of the German-speaking cantons in Switzerland took to using French-suited packs with animals on the trumps. Other parts of Switzerland, however, remained faithful to the Italian-suited forms. There seems to have been a gap between the disappearance of the French-suited 'animal' Tarot and the introduction of the modern 'bourgeois' French-suited Tarot pack, with genre scenes on the trumps, which first appeared in Switzerland in the 1890s. It is conceivable that players in the German-speaking cantons reverted to Italian-suited cards when French-suited cards ceased to be available. However, it seems more probable that the disappearance of the 'animal' Tarot in Switzerland corresponded to the extinction of some form of the game, perhaps a Swiss version of Grosstarock, which was played in Germany with similar cards. Switzerland is in fact the only country besides Italy where the Italian-suited Tarot pack remains in regular use for play, and presumably in the regions where the game now survives, Italian-suited Tarot cards have always been used. The Tarot de Besançon pattern was replaced in Switzerland in about 1860 by new Italian-suited designs based loosely on it and retaining Jupiter and Juno in place of the Pope and Popess on trumps V and II.

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<sup>2</sup> Possibly the earliest surviving example is one made by Johann Pelagius Mayer of Constance. Catherine Perry Hargrave, in her book *A History of Playing Cards*, New York, 1930, 1966, pp. 262, 266, dated it to 1680, stating that Mayer was active in Constance in the later part of the XVII century, but Max Ruh has shown this to be an error. In fact Mayer was born in Kempten im Allgäu in 1690, became a citizen of Constance in 1720 and is recorded in documents of 1730 and 1777.

The Tarot de Marseille also continued to be produced in Switzerland until quite recent times.

Apart from the brief account in the *Maison académique*, we know of no published descriptions of Swiss Tarot until the late XX century, and so it is impossible to follow the history of the game in that country. The *Atlas der Schweizerische Volkskunde* (ASV), based on a comprehensive survey carried out in the years 1937-1942, shows us a detailed picture of the distribution of Swiss card games, in particular Tarot, at that time, though unfortunately it includes hardly any details of how the games were played. The area with the greatest concentration of players was the westernmost part of canton Grisons, in the Romansh-speaking area around Disentis, where Italian-suited Tarot cards were the principal kind of playing-cards in use; further down the valley in the region from Ilanz to Chur, the game of Tarot is described as recently introduced. A second Tarot-playing area was nearby, in the eastern, German-speaking part of the canton of Wallis (Valais): Tarot was commonly played in the upper Goms, around Münster; in the region between there and Brig the game was remembered as played in former times, but there was a second, larger region around Visp where Tarot was occasionally played, and it was frequently played in the Lötschental just to the north. The mode of play in Wallis will be described in Chapter 15. The third significant area was around Fribourg, where Tarot was occasionally played but evidently in decline. There were several responses from Ticino that the game was formerly played there, and it was still frequently played in extreme north of the canton in the Val Bedretto. There were a few scattered responses from other parts of Switzerland saying that Tarot games were occasionally or had formerly been played, including just one from canton Jura (at Saignelégier). On the border with Germany at Rheinfelden and Stein am Rhein, there are reports of Zego having been played (this south German game will be described in Chapter 17) and from Liechtenstein, it is reported that Tarock was occasionally played with Austrian cards. The commentary in ASV admits that it



is not always clear from the survey what type of Tarot cards were used. Those playing Cego or Austrian Tarock are presumed to use 54-card French-suited packs, and ASV makes the assumption that in all the other Tarot-playing areas, Italian-suited cards are used. In view of the production from the late XIX century to the present day of the 78-card French-suited 'bourgeois' Tarot pack in Switzerland, it seems that this assumption must be wrong in some cases, and that these French-suited cards would have been in use in some of the areas designated by ASV as using Italian-suited cards.

Dr Eberhard states in the 1978 catalogue already mentioned that Tarot was at that time played only in four areas: Grisons, Wallis, Fribourg and Jura. This was confirmed to us in the 1970's by the playing-card manufacturers AG Müller, who added that in Fribourg the game had almost died out. In a recent communication, Walter Haas, who has been in contact with some former players in Fribourg, reports that the pack used there, for a game known as 'Le Tape', was the Tarot de Marseille, reduced to 66 cards. One of us has visited players in Grächen, Visp and Münster in Wallis, where Troggu is played with an Italian suited 62-card pack. Here too, the Tarot de Marseille was formerly used, but owing to the difficulty of obtaining these cards, the players nowadays use cards based on the the Tarot de Besançon. We have several descriptions of Troccas, played by Romansh speakers in Grisons with the full 78-card Tarot de Besançon pack. It therefore seems possible that there were as many as five separate Swiss Tarot traditions in the XX century: Troccas in Grisons, Troggu in Wallis, Le Tape in Fribourg, the Ticino game, and a game with French-suited cards, played in Jura and possibly parts of Fribourg. Unfortunately we can give descriptions of games for only three of these traditions: the Grisons game will be described in this chapter, the French-style Tarot game in Chapter 9 (games 9.10, 9.11 and 9.12), and the game from Wallis in Chapter 15 (games 15.1 and 15.2). Of the other games we know nothing for certain. We might speculate that the Ticino game, which was called Tarocchi, could have been related to the Lombard games

described in Chapter 6. Also the name 'Le Tape' strongly suggests that the Fribourg game involved bidding, and was perhaps closely related to the Wallis game, which is often known as Tappen or Tappä.

The game of Troccas played in Grisons with the Italian-suited pack is peculiar to Switzerland. We have six accounts of this game, all in general agreement but with some slight variation in detail. The first is a duplicated description in German (AGM), sent to us by the Swiss playing-card manufacturer AG Müller in response to an enquiry in 1968. The second is an account (Au) based on the visit by one of us, who took part in a game in Sedrun in 1978. The third is a paper in German by Carla Deplazes<sup>3</sup> (CD), which includes a set of rules of the game contributed by P.Maurus Carnot with additional notes by Thomas Deplazes, and much useful information about the distribution of the game and the Romansh terminology used by the players. The fourth is a set of rules in Romansh (BC), compiled by Norbert Berther and Gieri Carigiet for a tournament held in Savognin in August 1985. The fifth is a web page in English by Nicolette Deplazes<sup>4</sup> (ND), which describes a somewhat simplified version of the game. In May 2002 one of us had the pleasure of visiting Brigels and Dardin and playing Troccas there with Annalisa Cathomas (AC) and her family and friends; she has also supplied us with her *Cuorta introducziun el giug da Troccas* (Fribourg, 2000), and kindly helped us with translation and clarification of some of the other sources. It is clear that the AGM, CD and BC are not entirely independent: CD incorporates a summary of the rules which agrees very closely with AGM, and BC's information on the conversation during the deal and the names of the trumps has a lot in common with CD.

From both ASV and CD we can see that the heartland of Troccas includes the Tujetsch and Medel valleys, which meet at Disentis, and extends down the

<sup>3</sup> Carla Deplazes, 'Troccas – Das Tarockspiel in Graubünden', *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde*, 83. Jahrgang, Heft 1/2, Basel 1987, pp 41-59.

Surselva (the valley of the Vorderrhein) as far as Brigels. It is played to some extent in the Lumnezia valley and around Ilanz, and there are also a few players in Rhäzüns, Domat/Ems and Chur. From visits to the Surselva in 1978 and 2002 we can confirm that Troccas is the principal card game played in the areas around Sedrun and Brigels. In both places it is played by men and women of all ages, and has enjoyed something of a revival in the late XX century. Around Sedrun, tournaments are regularly held. ASV and CD show that Troccas spread eastward in the first part of the XX century, from Disentis to Ilanz, Domat/Ems and Chur. Troccas is always played with the Italian-suited Tarot with Juno and Jupiter depicted on trumps II and V; the players at Sedrun were unaware of the existence of the French-suited Tarot pack. All the sources agree that the principal form of the game is a four-handed one. AGM and CD include variations for six, three and five players, and further clarification of the three- and six-player games was provided by AC.

The players at Sedrun attribute the introduction of the game to their region to the invasion by French troops in 1798, but it is doubtful whether there is any substance to this tradition. Because of the unwavering use of a pack with French inscriptions on the trumps and court cards, it might be thought that the German- and Romansh-speaking cantons originally imported the game from the French-speaking part of the country. Indeed, the game of Troggu played in Wallis shows relationships to the tradition of Tarok l'Hombre and French Tarot. Troccas, on the other hand, displays no French characteristics and lacks the complications of bidding, bonuses and declarations. Moreover the option to throw in the hand after each round of the deal, and the knocking signal to indicate that one holds the highest outstanding trump, strongly suggest influence from Italy. At least the first of these features was already common in Italian card games in the XVI century. On the other hand, the obvious German etymology of the Romansh terms such as

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<sup>4</sup> Formerly at <http://www.crosswinds.net/~rudivale/troccas.htm> – dated 12 October, 1999; republished at <http://www.hollyfeld.org/heaven/Text/Divination/troccas.txt>

*il narr* and *il buob* suggests that the game as played amongst Romansh speakers has also been influenced by German-speaking players. It is probable that Troccas represents an indigenous Swiss tradition that has changed little since the XVII century, and it is quite likely that it arrived in Switzerland in the first place direct from Italy, rather than through France.

### *Romansh Terminology for Troccas*

The trumps are called *troccas* and *catschar troccas* is to draw trumps; the Fool is *il narr*. The four suits are known as *spadas* (swords), *cuppas* (cups), *rosas* (roses) and *bastuns* (batons). The seven honours are known as *ils honors* and the three trump honours, when held in one hand, are known as *igl juhe* (jubilation) and in Brigels as *giug dil gerber* (tanner's game). The King of a suit is *il retg*, the Queen is *la regina*, the Cavalier is *il cavagl* and the Jack is *il buob*; the numeral cards are *lecras*. A lone card of a suit in a player's hand is *ina scartina*. A player who has no trumps left is said to *dar da freid* (play cold). Although the twenty-one trump cards all bear titles in French, the players refer to them by number or by their Romansh names, which are as follows:

| <u>Trump</u> | <u>Romansh name(s)</u>            | <u>English translation</u>        |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| I            | il bagat                          | [the pagat]                       |
| II           | la gaglina, la biua               | the hen                           |
| III          | l'imperatura                      | the empress                       |
| IIII         | igl imperatur                     | the emperor                       |
| V            | il da Cuo, il Diu fauls           | the false god                     |
| VI           | ils amurai                        | the lovers                        |
| VII          | il carr, la Catrina en crotscha   | the wagon, Catherine in the coach |
| VIII         | la stadera, la giusta             | the scales, justice               |
| VIIII        | il pader                          | the monk                          |
| X            | la ventira, la roda dalla fortuna | luck, the wheel of fortune        |
| XI           | la forza                          | strength                          |
| XII          | il pendiu                         | the hanged man                    |

|       |   |   |
|-------|---|---|
| XIII  | la mort   | death   |
| XIII  | il aunghel, la tempronza  | the angel, temperance   |
| XV    | il giavel, il da cornas, il naucli,<br>il bab dallas femnas                       | the devil, the horned one, the evil one,<br>the father of young girls                   |
| XVI   | il tiaratriembel, il cametg, la<br>Cadi, la casa da Diu, la claustra<br>barschada | the earthquake, the lightning, the<br>church, the house of god, the burned<br>monastery |
| XVII  | las steilas   | the stars   |
| XVIII | la glina  | the moon  |
| XVIII | la sulegl   | the sun   |
| XX    | la dertgira, ils bluts, ils bluts digl<br>aug Rest, la giuventetgna               | judgement, the nudes, uncle<br>Christian's nudes, youth                                 |
| XXI   | il mund, la vacca, la biala, il<br>min, il miau, la ferma                         | the world, the cow, the beautiful one,<br>the cat, the strong one                       |

### 5.1 Modern four-handed Swiss Troccas (Grisons)

An Italian-suited 78-card pack is used. The four players play in two fixed partnerships. Deal and play are nowadays always anticlockwise. BC, CD and AGM tell us that in Disentis, but there only, the game was played clockwise, but AC informs us that this variant is now obsolete. We shall assume anticlockwise play throughout this description. The cards rank in their original order the 10s following the Jacks in Swords and Batons and the Aces following the Jacks in Cups and Coins. The cards have their standard values, and are counted in fours. The dealer's side will have two odd cards, which count as though they were accompanied by two empty cards to make a set of four. There are thus 72 points altogether.

At the start of the session, the four players form two partnerships by mutual agreement or by the following formal method. The top card of the pack is placed in the middle of the table, and the remaining cards are dealt out to the players, face up, one by one, until each player has a trump (a player who has already received a trump receives no more cards). When all the players have a trump, those with the two lowest trumps become partners, as do those with the

two highest; the player with the lowest trump becomes the first dealer. The players then arrange themselves so that partners are facing each other across the table.

### *The deal*

According to AC, the cards are never shuffled. The dealer is allowed to cut the pack several times, and then offers it to his left-hand opponent to cut. The cut card, which will become the bottom of the pack, is shown to the other three players, but not yet to the dealer, who will eventually receive it. The dealer, known as the "*scartist*", then deals nineteen cards to each of the other players and twenty-one to himself. The normal method of dealing is in three rounds: a batch of six cards to each player, then another batch of six each, then a batch of seven to each of the other three players and nine to the dealer. In the last round of the deal, the final card dealt to each of the other three players is turned face up. The *scartist*'s last card is not faced, since the other players have already seen it during the cut. After each of the three rounds of dealing there is an interval in which the players look at the cards they have so far received and decide whether the hand will continue or be abandoned. Any player can demand that the hand continue, but if all agree to abandon it, the cards are thrown in and redealt by the same dealer, who again does not shuffle the pack, but cuts it any number of times, after which it is cut by his left-hand opponent who shows the bottom card as before.

The procedure for deciding whether to abandon the deal is as follows. When everyone has six cards, the players speak in turn, beginning with the player to the dealer's right, who may either demand that the deal continue, by saying '*jeu mirel*' (I see it), or give some information about his hand, leaving it to the other players whether to continue. It is legal to give information about the general strength of one's hand, and the number of Kings, honours and trumps that are held, but not about specific cards or suits, except that a player who has the Fool may mention it. If the first player demands that the deal continue, the other players are not allowed to speak: the dealer must immediately deal a further six

cards each. If on the other hand, the first player gives information, the second player, the partner of the dealer, has the same options: he may say '*jeu mirel*', in which case the deal immediately continues, or may give information. If the first two players both give information, the third player may either say '*jeu mirel*', in which case the deal continues, or '*liber*' (free), leaving the decision to the dealer, who may then choose whether to throw in the cards or continue dealing. The third player and the dealer are not allowed to give information. If the deal is to continue, the dealer gives six more cards to each player, and is now allowed to look at the bottom card of the pack. The process of deciding whether to abandon the deal is repeated. If again someone requires the deal to continue, the dealer deals the rest of the cards. Again there is an opportunity to abandon the deal, by the same process as before, but now a player requiring the game to continue will say '*nus dein*' (we play) or '*fai scart*' (an instruction to the dealer to make his discard so that play can start). Despite such an instruction, if the *scartist* has no trumps at all at the end of the last round of the deal, he may choose to abandon the hand and deal afresh, even against the wishes of the other players; only the dealer has this privilege.

It will be noted that since the cards are only cut but not shuffled, the order of cards is undisturbed from the previous hand or abandoned deal. Therefore a player who remembers how the cards fell in the previous hand will often be able to guess from his own hand the location of other cards.

A side that is currently losing by at least nine points may demand that the deal be in two rounds of nine and ten cards, the dealer taking twelve cards in the second round. In this case the losing side is allowed to gather up their cards from the previous hand – the cards from their tricks, or those that they had been dealt if the hand was abandoned – arrange them in any order they wish, and insert them into the pack in a single block. Both partners of the losing side may see the order of these cards, but their opponents are not entitled to look at the arrangement. A side that is losing by eighteen or more points can require that in the next hand

each player should be dealt a single batch of nineteen cards, with the last twenty-one going to the dealer, and again they can arrange their cards from the previous hand or deal and place them in the pack in a block. The dealer cuts any number of times as usual, and the player to dealer's left cuts once and shows the bottom card as usual; when the cards are dealt in nines and tens or all at one, the dealer may look at the bottom card as soon as he wishes; he does not have to wait for the second round of the deal. As usual the last card dealt to each of the other three players is turned face up for all to see. When the cards are dealt in two rounds, there is an opportunity to abandon the hand after the first round or at the end of the deal; when they are dealt in a single round, there is just one opportunity at the end of the deal. In either case the procedure for making the decision is the same as when the deal is in three rounds.

When a deal is abandoned, the new deal must be made in the same number of rounds as the abandoned deal. For example, if a side losing by 11 points allows a deal in three rounds that is then abandoned, they cannot demand that the redeal be in two rounds.

### *Variants*

Au, AGM, CD and BC imply that the dealer is allowed to shuffle the cards before the deal when the deal is in two or three rounds. Only when a side losing by 18 or more points requires a deal in a single round are the cards merely cut and not shuffled.

CD, AGM and ND do not mention the practice of showing the bottom card of the pack during the cut. CD and AGM state as an optional rule that the last card dealt to all four players should be faced. ND does not envisage any of the dealt cards being shown.

Au reports that in Sedrun, a losing team may demand either a two round or a single round deal when they are 14 or more points down.

The greatest variation in the versions of Troccas played in different places concerns the type and amount of conversation and signals that are allowed



during the deal (and in some places also during the play of the cards), the rules being more liberal in the Tujetsch and Medel valleys, while to the east the game is more often played in silence. While ND allows no conversation at all, CD, BC and AC give numerous examples of phrases that can be used to describe one's hand; we shall return to these after describing the game itself.

### *Discard*

When the deal has been completed, the dealer must discard two cards face down to form the *scart*, which counts for his side at the end of the play. AGM and CD say that the dealer may discard an honour only if he discards two such, but give as a variation that some players do not allow honours to be discarded at all. ND, BC and AC do not allow honours to be discarded, though BC remarks that this is permitted in Disentis. According to Au, the players at Sedrun did not allow honours to be discarded, but said that in some villages lower down the valley, the dealer is allowed to discard a King or the *Bagat*, but not the *Mund* or *Narr*. AC tells us, however, that the variant allowing honours to be discarded is now obsolete.

### *Play*

The play is under the usual rules, except for the special rule about Kings and Jacks explained below. The *Narr* serves as Excuse, with exchange. The team that played the *Narr* is not allowed to give a card from the *scart* in exchange, and if they have not yet won any tricks, they keep the *Narr* face up until they do so and can give a card from their trick in exchange. If a side wins all the tricks, they also win the *Narr* and the *scart*. It is legal to lead the *Narr* to a trick, in which case the next player may play any card; this second card determines the suit of the trick, to which the others have to follow suit if they can, or otherwise trump if they can.

The following rule is unknown in any other type of Tarot game, but it is present in all the descriptions of Troccas that we have seen, albeit with slight variations. If a player plays the King of a suit in the first trick to which that suit is led, then the side that wins the trick may call for the Jack of the same suit to be played to it. If the Jack is called for, its holder must play it to the trick, taking a numeral card of the same suit from the trick in exchange and adding it to his hand. According to CD and AGM, if the holder of the Jack had already played the Queen or Cavalier of the suit to the trick, that card must be taken back in exchange for the Jack, rather than a numeral card, but according to Au and ND, a numeral card is always taken, even by a player who had previously played the Queen or Cavalier. According to BC and AC, the winners of the trick may call either '*buob*' ('Jack') or '*buob, sche*' ('Jack, if'). A call of '*buob*' requires the holder of the Jack to play it, taking back the Queen or Cavalier if he played either of those cards, and otherwise taking a numeral card of the suit led. '*Buob, sche*' requires the Jack to be played only if the holder did *not* play the Queen or Cavalier; if he did play the Queen or Cavalier he must announce this – the played card then remains in the trick and the player keeps the Jack in his hand for later use. If the Jack that is called for is in the *scart*, the *scartist* says '*el dirma*' (he is sleeping) and the call has no effect. If the holder of the King has the Jack as well, then he may play both cards to the trick the first time that the suit is led, taking from the trick a numeral card played by one of the other players. If the holder of the Jack has played the *Narr* to the trick, then calling for the Jack has no effect ('*Il narr stgisa mintga carta!*' – the Fool excuses every card). None of the printed sources gives a complete explanation of the rule about calling for a Jack, but most are consistent with the interpretation above, which we learned from AC; the exception is that in some places the special call '*buob, sche*' is not permitted.

CD states that the holder of the XXI may signal that he holds it by knocking on the table the first time that trumps are led. Subsequently, the holder of the highest outstanding trump can signal it by knocking on the table on the

next lead of a trump after it becomes highest, all higher trumps having been played. CD goes on to explain that this rule is not observed in all localities. AGM gives a similar rule, except that the signal is made on the first occasion when the holder of the highest trump is compelled to play a trump, rather than on the first lead of a trump. In the version reported by Au, there is no knocking signal, but conversation is permitted during play. Players may give true or false information about the cards they hold, or instructions or suggestions about what partner should play. The only restriction is that every remark be clearly audible and comprehensible to the others: secret signals are not allowed. At the other extreme, BC does not allow any signals during the play, and ND does not mention the possibility of any conversation or signals whatever. AC explains that signals and conversation during play are not permitted in Ilanz, Brigels or Danis, but that signals or announcements of one's highest trump are permitted in Surrein.

### *Scoring*

A game consists of four hands, not including abandoned deals. At the end of each hand, each side scores the difference, positive or negative, between its total of card points and 36, and adds it to its cumulative score from previous hands. After each hand, therefore, the positive score of one side will be exactly balanced by the negative score, of the same absolute value, of the other. Both Au and CD state that this score is not written down, but remembered by the players, but in the games with AC, it was written on a slate. The winning side is of course that which has a positive cumulative score at the end of the four hands.

### *Conversation*

The exchange of information during the deal about the quality of the players' hands is known as *tschintschar* (talking), *dar cun autras* (playing with other cards) or *cantar* (singing). The conversation takes place in a kind of code, referring indirectly to the cards held by speaking of places and in metaphors. The

aim is to pass useful information to your partner while confusing the opponents. There is no requirement that the information given be true: a player may exaggerate or make entirely false statements to mislead the opponents. Tone of voice and gestures accompanying the remarks can also be important. It is usually better not to say too much – one does not want to risk giving information to the enemy.

In the version of the game played with AC, the only individual card to be named is the Fool (*Narr*). Apart from this one gives information about the number of honours held, and one's trumps. Usually, the information relates to the cards one has received in the latest round of the deal, but one can also give a summary of one's whole hand. '*In*' (one) indicates a holding of *two* of the six honours other than the Fool. With only one honour one says '*strusch in*' (hardly one). Three honours could be indicated by '*schon in*', or with such good cards one might simply insist on continuing (*jeu mirel* or if the deal is complete *nus dein*). Announcing '*il narr*' indicates the Fool with other trumps; the Fool without other trumps is '*il narr blut*' (the naked Fool). '*Tric e trac*' (this and that) indicates a set of cards half of which are trumps. With fewer trumps one could say '*strusch tric e trac*'. Good trumps can also be indicated by saying '*da Medel*' (from the Medel valley). In a complete hand of 19 cards, '*in trocsetg*' indicates 5 or 6 trumps, '*ina trocca*' indicates 7 or 8, and '*tric e trac*' would be 9 or 10. Cards that contain nothing of value can be indicated by '*nuot*' (nothing); if they are a little better one can say '*pauc*' (a little). '*Autras*' (other cards) also indicates that the speaker does not have much and is a suggestion to abandon the deal. If, having indicated some good cards in the previous round of the deal, one receives nothing useful in the following round, one can say '*nuot dapli*' (nothing more), '*quei ei stau tut*' (that was all), or '*buc dil tut autras*' (nothing at all more). An extra feature of the hand, such as a void in some suit, is indicated by saying '*tgei che ti vulas*' (what you like). The same expression can be used by the *scartist's* partner in the first round of a three round deal to indicate to the *scartist*

that the bottom card is a good one – for example a King. If the scartist's partner has two or more Queens, he may say '*duas femnas*' (two women) to suggest that the *scartist* should discard in such a way as to create a void in preference to two singletons. '*Ina cuort*' (a court) or '*ina famiglia*' (a family) refers to the King, Queen, Cavalier and Jack of a suit together.

Further examples of *tschintschar* are given in CD and BC; the range of permitted or customary expressions varies greatly from place to place. In some places the XXI can be named. When describing trumps in relation to the Medel valley a player might say: '*jeu sun da Medel*', '*duas da Medel*', '*tschéc da Medel*' (I have some trumps, two trumps, plenty of trumps). Players will sometimes use the names of places in the valley to indicate their trump length and strength, lower down the valley indicating stronger cards: for example '*gnanc tochen Sogn Gion*' (not even at Sogn Gion) shows very weak trumps, while '*ei va encunter Salvaplauna*' (nearly at Salvaplauna – a meadow just outside Disentis) indicates very strong trumps, as does '*clavau dalla claustra*' (monastery cellar).

A King and Queen together are sometimes called '*ina napla*' (a group). Court cards can be described in relation to the Tujetsch valley, for example '*mo in pèr da Tujetsch*' (just a few court cards). In the Medel valley they say '*da Mustér*' (from Disentis) for court cards, because people from Disentis were thought of as wealthy and well dressed. In Ilanz, Kings are described in terms of flowers, '*ina flur*' (one flower) corresponding to a strength of about two Kings. '*In fluretg*' (a small flower) would represent one King and '*in fluretg nausch*' (a poor little flower) is a bare King, without other court cards; on the other hand '*in tschéc fluretg*' can show two Kings supported by some court cards. '*In persul*' (only one) and '*in miserabel*' (a miserable one) are similar to '*in fluretg nausch*', showing a lone King. '*Ina femna*' (a woman) indicates court cards without the King. "*In tec carn*" (a little meat) shows a few court cards. '*Bi e bein in*' shows a King accompanied by other cards of the suit, or the Bagat with some trumps and '*il narr bein*' shows the Narr with trumps.

A good hand might be indicated by saying '*jeu gidel*' or '*jeu tegn cun tei*' (I help), '*jeu sun cheu*' (I am here), '*mia part bein*' (my share is good) or '*jeu hai miu giug*' (I have my game), or '*paset*'. The following would describe a mediocre hand: '*strusch mia part*' (hardly my share), '*pli bugen autras*' (I would prefer other cards), '*in paletg*', '*pas*'. With a bad hand one can say: '*lavadas*' (washout), '*buca cheu*' (not here), '*vitas*' (empty cards), '*senza mei*' (without me) or '*pasun*'. To demand that the deal continue, vetoing the throw-in, one can say '*aunc sis da quellas*' (another six like those), '*dai vinavon!*' (deal some more), '*jeu stun*' (I stay) or '*tuttas*' (all).

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### 5.2 Modern six-handed Troccas

The six players form two fixed partnerships of three each: the members of the two sides sit alternately. Each player receives thirteen cards in the deal: one round of six cards each followed by one round of seven cards each, the last card being dealt face up. The dealer takes no extra cards, and there is therefore no discard. There is no conversation and no option to abandon the deal. At the end of the round, the cards are counted in fours; one side will have two odd cards, which are counted as if they were a full set of four, so that there are still 72 points altogether. A game presumably consists of six rounds. All else is as in the four-handed game.

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### 5.3 Modern three-handed Troccas

Each of the three players plays for himself. The cards are dealt in batches of five, the dealer taking the last three cards and discarding three, so that each player has twenty-five cards. Since there are no partners, there is no conversation, no signalling and no possibility to abandon the deal. According to AC, there is no option to call for the Jack when playing the King to the first trick in a suit. However, a player who holds both the King and Jack of a suit can play them both

to the first trick in that suit, taking a low card from the trick in exchange. According to AC, the cards are counted in threes, so that there are 78 points in total, and each player wins or loses the amount by which their card point total exceeds or falls short of 26. AGM and BC give a different method of counting the cards: they are counted singly, but empty cards in the *scart* count nothing, and counting cards in the *scart* count one less than their nominal value, so that there 127 points altogether. The dealer scores the difference between his point-total and 43 points; each of the other two players scores the difference between their point total and 42 points. For the rest, all the rules of the four-handed game apply.

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#### 5.4 Modern five-handed Troccas

Each player plays for himself. The game is exactly like the three-handed one, save that the dealer gives fifteen cards to each of the other players and eighteen to himself, discarding three. The method of dealing is not stated; presumably it is in three rounds of five cards each. The dealer scores the difference, positive or negative, between his point-total and 27 points: each of the other players scores the difference, positive or negative, between their point-total and 25 points.

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It would be interesting to find out what kind of Tarot was played around Fribourg – it might still be possible to recover some information about this 66-card game: although it was already in decline in the 1940's, it appears that it continued to be played by a few people for some years after that. It would also be interesting to know what game was played in the Val Bedretto: according to ASV Tarot thriving there in the early 1940's and it is quite conceivable that some of those who live there still remember or even continue to play it.

A form of Tarot is described in a XIX-century leaflet entitled *Règles du Jeu de Tarots*, by an author with the initials F. N.-C.-G.-B. and published in

Geneva; unfortunately we cannot date it more precisely. It gives rules for both four- and three-handed forms.

### 5.5 Four-handed Jeu de Tarots (Geneva, XIX century)

A 78-card Italian-suited pack is used; it is a form of the Tarot de Marseille, since it contains the Pope and Popess rather than Jupiter and Juno. The 21 is called *le Monde*, the 1 *le Bateleur* and the Fool *le Mat* or *le Fou*; the plain suits are called *merces*. Trumps are called *Tarots*. The Fool is worth 4 points; otherwise the cards have their standard point-values. The Fool serves as Excuse without exchange. The cards rank in their original order, the 10s following the Jacks in Swords and Batons and the Aces following the Jacks in Cups and Coins. The four players are divided into two sides, partners facing each other across the table. Four hands constitute a rubber (*partie*). The dealer gives 19 cards to each player, either all at once or in two or three rounds. He takes the last two cards for himself and discards two. If he has the Bateleur (trump 1) and at most one other trump, but not accompanied by the 21 or the Fool, he may discard it; but he must then announce that he has done so, and may not discard any other counting card. At the end of each hand, the cards won by each side are counted in fours; the Fool, unaccompanied, counts 4 points; three odd low cards count 1 point. (This is the equivalent of valuing the Fool at 5 points and exchanging a low card for it.) The dealer treats the two cards he has discarded as if they were four. There are thus 72 points in all. To win the rubber, a side must have a cumulative total of 145 points in all; if both have 144, neither scores. If the dealer makes no tricks, the winner of the last trick may take his discard for himself. Likewise, if the player who had the Fool makes no tricks, the winner of the last trick may take the Fool for himself. But neither rule applies if it is the dealer who has the Fool. Because of these rules, each player's tricks should be kept separately, so that it will be clear if any individual player fails to win a trick; partners should not



combine their trick piles until the end of the hand. In the course of play, partners may make certain conventional signals to each other, as follows:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| knock the table when playing a Tarot:  | “I have the Monde (or the highest Tarot not yet played)”; |
| describe a circle with the card when playing a Tarot:                                  | “I have the XX”;  |
| drop the card from above when playing a Tarot:   | “I have the XIX”;   |
| put the thumb on the middle and ring fingers and hold the index and little fingers up: | “I have the XVIII”;                                       |
| rap three or four times with the index finger:   | “I have the XVII”;  |
| point towards the table with the thumb:  | “I have the Bateleur”;                                    |
| rap with a card when playing it:   | “play your highest card”;                                 |
| pick up the last trick and rap with it lightly on the remaining pile:                  | “lead a Tarot”.   |

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### 5.6 Three-handed Jeu de Tarots (Geneva, XIX century)

All is as in game 5.5, with the following exceptions. Each of the three players plays for himself; there being no partners, there are no signals. The dealer gives 25 cards to each player, either all at once or in two or three rounds. He takes the last three cards for himself and discards three. If he has the Bateleur (trump 1) and at most two other trumps, but not accompanied by the 21 or the Fool, he may discard it; but he must then announce that he has done so, and may not discard any other counting card. At the end of each hand, the cards won by each player are counted in threes; the Fool, unaccompanied, counts 4 points; two odd low cards count 1 point. There are 78 points in all. To be certain of not losing the rubber, a player must attain a cumulative total of 79 points. At the end of the rubber, the player who has the lowest cumulative score pays both the other two; if two have the same score, lower than that of the third player, both pay him. If by the beginning of the third hand a player has attained a cumulative total of 79

points, or would do so if he added the value of the Monde or the Fool which he has in his hand, he must then play *de dehors* (from outside), in the following sense. When on lead, he must always lead his highest Tarot if he has any. When he has no more Tarots, he must lead Kings. After that, he may lead a Queen as long as it seems that it will win the trick (the King has been played and no one is known to be void in the suit.) He must always take a trick when he can and is last to play, but, if with a Tarot, with the lowest Tarot possible. He must not lead a suit in which another player is known to be void. If he has the Fool, he must save it to the last trick.

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We may conclude this chapter with a problematic game a partial statement of whose rules was discovered by Thierry Depaulis, written on the two sides of a sheet wrapped round an anonymous German French-suited 78-card Tarot pack whose trumps bear scenes of European cities. The trump 1 bears the inscription “Mainzer Carneval 1839”, as it does in other packs of the same design. The rules are written in French and are for a game with 54 cards. The handwriting is French or French-Swiss (*not* German), and probably from the period between 1870 and 1914. We know of no other Tarot game played with 54 cards in France; and the Fool is called *Excuse* or *Squies*, a clear sign of the influence of German-speaking players. A possible place of origin would be Alsace; but there is an indication that the game is Swiss, in that it has a certain resemblance to game 15.1. Unfortunately these incomplete rules do not tell us how the Fool is used: whether it serves as *Excuse*, ranks as the highest trump or combines the two roles.

### 5.7 Jeu du Tarot (? Switzerland, c. 1900)

A 54-card French-suited pack is used; there may be from 3 to 7 players. The deal is effected as follows:

For 3 players: 6 cards to the Écart (= talon), then 4 rounds of 3 cards to each, and a final round of 4 cards each (16 cards to each altogether, with an Écart of 6).

For 4 players: 6 cards to the Écart, then 4 rounds of 3 each (12 altogether, with an Écart of 6).

For 5 players: 9 cards to the Écart, in three groups of 3; then 3 rounds of 3 each (9 altogether, with an Écart of 9).

For 6 players: 6 cards to the Écart, then a round of 3 to each, then 6 more to the Écart, and finally 4 cards to each (7 altogether, with an Écart of 12).

For 7 players: 6 cards to the Écart, a round of 3 to each, 6 more to the Écart, then 3 more to each (6 altogether, with an Écart of 12).

Presumably there is bidding, with a declarer who plays alone against the rest; he takes the Écart and discards. It is stated that, with fewer than 7 players, he may not discard honours (Kings and trump honours), unless he has four of them; but in the 7-player game, there is no restriction on discarding honours. At the end of the hand, the cards are counted in threes, with the standard point-values. There being 70 points altogether, the player who has taken the Écart must make at least 36 points ("35 points plus one") to win; his opponents must make at least 35 points (collectively) to defeat him.

That is all that this incomplete set of rules tells us about this game.

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## CHAPTER 6

### Tarot in Lombardy

Milan was one of the original centres of Tarot; probably it was at the court of Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, that the pack and the game were invented. It must have been from Milan, during the wars from 1494 to 1525 in which the French, under Charles VIII, Louis XII and Francis I, fought for possession of that city, that the game spread to France and Switzerland. Milan was occupied by the French from 1499 to 1512 and from 1515 to 1522. The Swiss were heavily involved in those wars, being part of the alliance that defeated Louis XII at Novara in 1512 and maintaining Massimiliano Sforza as Duke from 1512 to 1515; they were in turn defeated by Francis I at Marignano in the latter year. Under Francis I (1515-1547) there was a great vogue for Italian culture in France, centring on Lyons. Playing cards found at the Castello Sforzesco in Milan during the reconstruction at the beginning of the XX century, and now in the Raccolta Bertarelli in the Castello, demonstrate clearly that it was from the Milanese standard pattern, used for regular packs as well as Tarot packs, that the principal French pattern for the Tarot pack, the Tarot de Marseille, was derived.

The order of the trumps in the Tarot de Marseille was given in Chapter 2. This was the order already observed in France by 1557, as is shown by the numbered trumps in the non-standard pack made in that year by Catelin Geoffroy of Lyons. One would naturally assume that this order was that observed in Milan; but what little evidence we have conflicts with this. Two Italian sources testify to a slightly different order, though one still having the characteristic peculiarity that

Temperance has the highest position of any of the three Virtues, being placed as trump XIV between Death and the Devil. The first of these sources is a poem concerning ladies at the court of Pavia, a subsidiary court to that of Milan, that has been attributed to Giambattista Susio (1519-1583) and was written in about 1570.<sup>1</sup> The order of the trumps differs from that of the Tarot de Marseille for those occupying the seventh to the eleventh positions, thus:

| <u>Susio</u>               |      | <u>Tarot de Marseille</u> |
|----------------------------|------|---------------------------|
| the Old Man (= the Hermit) | XI   | Force                     |
| the Wheel                  | X    | the Wheel of Fortune      |
| Fortitude                  | VIII | the Hermit                |
| the Chariot                | VIII | Justice                   |
| Justice                    | VII  | the Chariot               |

The numbers are those given in the Tarot de Marseille; Susio does not give the numbers, but they are what these trumps would receive in a numbering from I to XXI. Apart from the trifling difference that Susio places the Popess above the Empress, his order otherwise agrees with that of the Tarot de Marseille. The second Italian source is a Discourse delivered at Monte Regale (modern Mondovì) in Piedmont in 1565 by Francesco Piscina.<sup>2</sup> The order he gives differs from Susio's in that, following a Piedmontese peculiarity, he ranks the Angel higher than the World;<sup>3</sup> but the five trumps listed above are in exactly the same order as given by Susio, and have the numbers given above. These are the only

<sup>1</sup> See Ridolfo Renier, 'Tarocchi di M. M. Boiardo', in N. Campanini (ed.), *Studi su Matteo Maria Boiardo*, Bologna, 1894; see pp. 256-9. The poem is one of a type known as *tarocchi appropriati*, in which each of a number of people is associated with one of the Tarot trumps.

<sup>2</sup> *Discorso dil S. Fran. Piscina da Carmagnola sopra l'ordine delle figure de Tarocchi*, Monte Regale, 1565; a copy is in the Biblioteca Marazza in Borgomanero. See F. Pratesi, 'Italian Cards: New Discoveries', no. 4, *The Playing Card*, Vol. XVI, 1987, pp. 27-36.

<sup>3</sup> If we have interpreted his ornate prose correctly. He speaks of a card portraying the Celestial Paradise, and incorporating an Angel singing and playing, as the 'final portrait' (*ultimo ritratto*), and 'before the image of Paradise', a portrait of the four Evangelists (with their four symbols), with the world in the middle of them; Piscina is running through the trumps from the lowest to the highest. Evidently the design of the World card known to Piscina had the symbols of the four Evangelists in the corners, as it does in the Tarot de Marseille and in Viéville's pack.

two known Italian sources dealing with the ancient order of the trumps in Lombardy or Piedmont: we thus have no evidence of the use in Italy of the order they have in the Tarot de Marseille before the XVIII century. By the end of the XVII century, the manufacture of playing cards had died out in Lombardy as a result of the economic depression there, and in the XVIII century Tarot de Marseille packs were imported from France into both Lombardy and Piedmont. Piedmontese and Bolognese cardmakers, and later Lombard ones, then began to produce imitations of these Tarot de Marseille packs, in two different versions: the indigenous patterns were extinct. There is, however, one other testimony to the trump order given by Susio: a pack made in about 1650 in Paris by Jacques Viéville. In this, trumps VII to XI have just the subjects given by Susio and shown in the table above (and the 'Hermit' is called 'the Old Man' (*le Viélar*), as it is by Susio); all the other trumps are in the same order as in the Tarot de Marseille.

These facts pose something of a puzzle. All hypotheses appear equally improbable. Was the trump order given by Susio that originally observed in Milan, and did the French cardmakers alter it? Or was the Tarot de Marseille order observed in Milan itself, and that given by Susio in other parts of Lombardy? Or was the Tarot de Marseille order originally observed in Lombardy, and altered in that province in the XVI century? We have no plausible explanation to offer.

Although the Milanese form of Tarot goes back to the very beginning of the game in the early XV century, we have no account of it from before the XVIII century. In his travel book of 1768, Joseph Baretti wrote of Tarot being played in Lombardy, principally in four-handed forms.<sup>4</sup> The manufacture of playing cards in Lombardy died out towards the end of the XVII century, and players subsequently used Tarot de Marseille packs imported from France; Bolognese

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Baretti, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy*, Vol. II, London, 1768, pp. 219-21.

cardmakers began in about 1740 to produce packs for use in Lombardy, in a slight variation of the Tarot de Marseille; as the economy of Lombardy revived in the mid-century, cardmakers there produced packs in this 'Lombard variant' form, at first with backs on which were the trade-signs of Bolognese cardmakers. The French practice of having the name of each of the trumps and court cards inscribed at the bottom of the card had not previously prevailed in Italy, but in the Lombard variant these names were copied, in French, from the prototypes; from 1810 onwards, Italian equivalents were substituted.

The earliest printed account of the various Tarot games played in Lombardy seems to have been contained in *Il Maestro de' Giuochi*, published in Milan in 1811 and reprinted in 1830, 1832, and 1879. We have not seen an edition before that of 1832; but the text was presumably unaltered, since it appears, with the most minor variations, in a multitude of other books: *Il Giuocatore de' Tarocchi* (1817), *Il Giuocatore in Conversazione* (n.d., 1820, 1843), *Il Giuocatore nella Sala nella Sala di Conversazione*, (1825, 1838, 1848), and *Il Nuovo Giuocatore in Conversazione* (1857), all published in Milan. The predominant form was the four-handed one, described below as 6.1; but it is much older than the first account of it in Italian. It was described in a book in German, *Die beste und neueste Art das in den vornehmsten Gesellschaften heutiges Tages so beliebte Taroc-Spiel sowol in drey Personen zum König, als in vier wirklichen Personen mit zweyerley Karten recht und wohl zu spielen* (BNA), published in Nuremberg in 1763.<sup>5</sup> The book characterises it as the latest form of four-handed Taroc in vogue in Vienna; accounts of it were subsequently included in German card-game books up to the early XIX century and in Dutch ones up to 1836. The use in the Viennese game of Italian terms such as *reale* and *doppio* clearly indicates its derivation from Milan, which was under Austrian rule from 1713 to 1797 and from 1815 to 1859; we may assume that it was played there from about 1750 onwards, and reached Vienna in about 1760. It is a little surprising to find it described as a newly fashionable game in Vienna, as it is a

very basic Tarot game without frills. It was still played in Piacenza, just south of the Po, up to the 1980s, although all forms of the game of Tarot have now died out in that city, and had probably died out in almost all the province of Lombardy before the outbreak of the First World War.

6.1 Four-handed Tarocchi (Lombardy, from c. 1750, and Piacenza, XX century)  
and Taroc (Austria, Germany and the Netherlands, from c. 1760 to c. 1840)

*Terminology*

The XXI, I and Fool are called in Italian respectively *il Mondo* (the World), *il Bagatto* and *il Matto*, and in German *der Mongue*, *der Pagat* and *der Sküs*; other trump cards are referred to by number. Trumps are called *tarocchi* in Italian, and *Tarocs* in German; in Italian high trumps are called *mattatori*. In German the suits are referred to by their Italian names. In Italian the Queen is called *Dama*, and a set of all court cards of a suit in one hand an *imperiale*; a numeral card of a suit is called a *scartina* or a *sfaglia*. The Mondo, Bagatto, Matto and the four Kings are collectively called 'honours' (*onori*). The player to the right of the dealer is called the *eletta*. In the Italian text a slam (winning all the tricks) is called *cappotto* and in the German one it is known by the Italian term *Volata*. In Italian the discard is called *lo scarto* and in German *der Scar*.

*Rank and values of the cards*

The cards have their standard values, save for the XXI, which is worth 6 points instead of 5, and is, as usual, the highest trump. The cards are counted in fours, but two empty cards left over are worth nothing, so that there are 72 points in all. The Fool serves as Excuse, with exchange.

*Play*

The four players are divided into two fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table. The dealer gives nineteen cards to each player (the method is not specified), and takes the last two for himself. He turns face up the last card he gives to each of the other three players. He also turns face up the two last he



takes for himself; if either of these is an honour or a trump, he continues to turn up, one by one, the cards of his hand, beginning with the last one dealt, until he has exposed two of his cards that are neither trumps nor honours. All now pick up their cards; in the Milanese game, any player may, before the dealer discards, propose going *a monte*, that is, throwing the hands in and proceeding to a new deal by the next dealer. This happens only if all agree; the practice was not followed outside Italy. The dealer now discards two cards face down; he may never discard an honour, and may discard a trump only if he is compelled to, but need not then announce the fact. The player to the dealer's right now asks him if he has completed his discard, and if he has, then leads to the first trick. The hands are now played out; each player, although he has a partner, keeps the tricks he personally has won beside him. When the Fool is played by any player, it is taken back and a card is given in exchange from the tricks won by that player, and not from the discard or from his partner's tricks; if he has not yet won a trick, he gives a card in exchange as soon as he wins one, but if he never wins a trick he must surrender the Fool to the player who won the trick to which he played it. If the dealer wins no trick, he must surrender his discard to the winner of the last trick.

### *Scoring*

At the end of a hand, the cards won by partners are united and the point-total of each side is reckoned. If both sides have 36 points, neither scores; otherwise, the side with more than 36 points marks as its score for that hand the excess of its point-total over 36. A rubber (*partita*, *Partie*) consists of four hands, so that each player deals once; if in one of the hands the players go *a monte*, that still counts as one of the four hands, although there is no score, and that dealer does not deal again. At the end of the rubber, each side's scores for the four hands are totalled; the side with the higher total score has won. If the winning side's total score exceeds that of the losing side by between 1 and 35 points, it has won a simple game (*semplice*); each member of the losing side pays 1 game point to one of the

winners. If the excess is between 36 and 71 points, the winners have obtained a *reale*, and are paid 2 game points each; if between 72 and 107 points, they have won a second *reale*, and are paid 3 game points each; and so on. If the losers' total score is 0, the winners have won a double game (*doppio*), and are awarded an additional game point each. If in any of the hands a side made a slam or *cappotto*, both its members receive 2 additional game points; in the Austrian game, the amount of this bonus was subject to prior agreement. The Austrian text further specifies that a side that makes a slam in one hand, but fails to win the rubber, obtains no bonus for the slam. When a single player wins every trick in a hand, it is called a *cappottone*, but there is no special bonus.

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There was also a three-handed game with a special name, Reseghino, also very straightforward.

## 6.2 Reseghino (Lombardy, XVIII and XIX centuries)

There are three players; the cards have their standard values, and are counted in threes, so that there are 78 points altogether. The dealer gives twenty-five cards to each player, and then takes the last three for himself. He discards three cards, none of which can be an honour; he may discard trumps only if he has to, but need not then announce the fact. The Fool serves as Excuse, with exchange; if the one who played it makes no tricks, he surrenders it to the player who won the trick to which he played it. If the dealer makes no tricks, he surrenders his discard to the winner of the last trick. At the end of each hand, each player marks as his score the difference, positive or negative, between 26 and the points on the tricks he has won. A rubber consists of three hands; each player totals his scores on the three hands; the winner is the player with the highest total score.

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The description common to the numerous books mentioned above also covers four versions of Tarocc'Ombre, for three, four, five or seven players.

These are Tarot games with bidding, a new feature adapted from the three-handed Spanish game originally known in Spain as Renegado, but everywhere else as Ombre or l'Hombre, and played with a regular 40-card pack. Three-handed Ombre with bidding dated from about 1630, and spread all over Europe; the radical innovation of bidding that it introduced into card play made it the most successful card game that had ever been invented, as successful in its day as Contract Bridge in ours. It was the first to have elaborate treatises devoted to its strategy. It underwent a rapid evolution, with new types of bid being introduced, and also adaptations for different numbers of players; Quadrille, for four players, was the most important. Bidding was transferred from Ombre and Quadrille into numerous trick-taking games in which it had not previously figured. In this process, types of bid used in Ombre and Quadrille were borrowed for other games, following the same principle; these included the bids made in Quadrille whereby the declarer called for a King not in his hand to determine the holder of that King as his partner. In Ombre and its derivatives, the bidding did not affect what the declarer had to do (with his partner, if any) in order to win, but the conditions under which he had to do it; once play started, everything was the same.<sup>5</sup> The principle that the bid might affect what the declarer must do in order to win, as in Bridge, was first introduced in Boston, the first of the Whist family to incorporate bidding. The importation of bidding into Tarot games was the most important development in their history, above all in the games that evolved in the Habsburg empire. The use in German Tarok l'Hombre games of Italian terminology such as '*a due*', '*ad una*', makes it probable that the innovation first occurred in Italy. Nevertheless, Tarot games with bidding did not prove very

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<sup>5</sup> In one respect, Tarot games and others which had borrowed bidding from Ombre diverged from their prototype. In Ombre, the declarer has, in order to win the hand, to win more tricks than either one of his two opponents, taken separately. But in all Tarot games with bidding, the points won by the opponents count together: the declarer, in order to win the hand, has to make more points than the opponents *taken together*.

popular in Italy; surviving examples are Terziglio, played in Bologna and its environs, and certain games played in Sicily.

Game 6.3 introduces another development that was to be of great importance outside Italy: the use of the 54-card pack, or *mazzo castrato*, shortened by the omission of the six lowest-ranking cards from every plain suit (see Chapter 1). This idea seems to have originated in Germany in about 1750. It is common to all the games played within what was the Habsburg empire, but never caught on in Switzerland, France or Belgium; it was only ever of minor importance in Italy, although in some areas games are still played with the 54-card pack, and 54-card Tarocco piemontese packs are still offered for sale.

### 6.3 Three-handed Tarocc'Ombre

The game is played with the shortened 54-card pack. The cards are counted in threes, with standard values; there are thus 70 points in all. The dealer gives seventeen cards to each player (the method is unspecified), and takes the last three cards for himself. He discards three cards; he may not discard honours (cards worth 5 points), and may discard a trump only if he has to. There are, in ascending order, three possible positive bids: '*Entro con due carte*' ('I come in with two cards'), '*Ad una*' ('With one') and '*A niente*' ('With nothing'); there may previously have been a lowest bid of '*A tre*', dropped as making a win too easy. Bidding takes place in rotation as soon as the dealer has discarded. In the first round of the bidding, each player may either pass or make any positive bid higher than any so far made; a player says '*Entro con una carta*' if he is making the first positive bid but at the second level. Once having passed, a player may not re-enter the bidding. If more than one player has made a positive bid, the bidding continues; but a player earlier in the bidding order and still in the bidding may make the *same* bid as the highest one so far made. Thus the bidding may go: A '*Entro con due carte*'; B passes; C (dealer) '*Ad una*'; A '*Ad una*'; C '*A niente*'; A '*A niente*', A becoming declarer at the highest level.. A declarer who said '*con*

*due carte*' may now ask for any two cards he does not have in his hand, and the players holding those cards must give them to him in exchange for others, given face down. One who bid '*Ad una*' similarly asks for one card, and one who said '*A niente*' for none. (It is unclear what happens if declarer asks for a card in the dealer's discard; if he asks only for honours, he is sure to avoid this.) The hands are then played out under the same rules as in Reseghino. If the declarer has made 36 points or more, he has won; if he has made 35 or fewer, he has lost. According as he has won or lost, he is paid by or pays to each opponent 2 game points if he bid *a due*, 3 if he bid *ad una*, and 4 if he bid *a niente* (this last is not stated explicitly), together with 1 game point for each full set of 5 points by which his score exceeded or fell short of 35 points. To these payments a bonus of 3 game points is added if the declarer made *cappotto*. The declarer, if not the dealer, may, if the dealer has made a positive bid, throw down his hand before play begins. In this case, he pays the other two only the basic amount, according to his bid. The purpose of his sacrifice bid was to prevent the dealer from making a *cappotto*.

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#### 6.4 Ombra arrabiata

This is simply four-handed Tarocc'Ombre. The 54-card pack is used, and each player receives thirteen cards, the declarer taking the last two and discarding two. Bidding and play are as in game 6.3, so that the declarer plays alone against the other three. The cards are counted in fours; apparently, the point-values are as in game 6.1, that is, standard save that the XXI is worth 6 points, and, when points are counted, two empty cards left over score nothing. There are then 66 points in all. The declarer wins if he has 34 points or more, and loses if he has 33 or fewer. The account of the scoring appears to be garbled: a reasonable reconstruction is that the basic scores are 4 game points *a due*, 5 *ad una* and 6 *a niente*, with 1 game point for every full set of five points above or below 33 and a bonus of 4

game points for *cappotto*. (The text gives the basic scores as 14 game points *a due* and 15 *ad una*.) All else is as in game 6.3.

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### 6.5 Five-handed Tarocc'Ombre

This game is particularly carelessly described, especially in respect of the scoring and the evaluation of card points. The full 78-card pack is used, and each player receives fifteen cards, the dealer taking the last three and discarding three. A declarer who has bid *a due* or *ad una*, having received the one or two cards he has asked for, 'calls' another card he does not have: the holder of this card becomes his partner, but does not reveal the fact until he plays the called card. (Presumably a declarer who has bid *a niente* has the same privilege.) It is vaguely indicated that the declarer and his partner need 36 points in order to win. If this is right, it suggests that there are 70 or 71 points in all. This can be achieved if the values are standard, the XXI counting 5 points and not 6, the cards are counted in fours, and the nothing is scored for one, two or three empty cards left over. This method seems somewhat clumsy, and may well not have been that used. The account says nothing about payment for win or loss. A possible solution would be to make the value of each hand three times that in game 6.4 for the declarer and his partner, and twice for their opponents. E.g. if the declarer's side achieves a bare win *a due*, each opponent pays 8 game points, and declarer and his partner take 12 game points each; conversely, if they suffer a bare loss, each pays 12 game points, and the three opponents take 8 game points each. Those who wish to try out this game are at liberty to arrange these matters as they think best.

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### 6.6 Seven-handed Tarocc'Ombre

The full 78-card pack is used, and each player receives eleven cards, the dealer taking the last one and discarding one. Play is as in game 6.5. The account says that a declarer who has bid '*A niente*' must play without a partner. This may have

applied to game 6.5 also, but seems to make an absurd gap between the difficulty of winning *ad una* and *a niente*. Nothing is said about the way points are reckoned or the method of scoring.

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What is essentially the game of Reseghino, now called simply Tarocchi, survived in Como into the XX century, but may no longer be played there. The following description is based on the account given in Rino Fulgi Zaini's *Giuochi di Carte* (1st edn. 1934, 7th edn. Milan, 1968) and one given orally by a gentleman who formerly lived in Como; the slight differences between them in the following description will be indicated by 'Zaini' and 'Como' in brackets.

#### 6.7 Three-handed Tarocchi (Como, XX century)

The XXI is called simply *Ventuno* (twenty-one); otherwise the terminology is as in game 6.1. The cards have their standard values, save that the Fool (Matto) is worth only 4 points instead of 5. The Fool serves as Excuse, *without* exchange. The cards are counted in threes, but the player with two cards over counts them as if they were three, and the Fool is counted separately on its own; the effect is just as if the Fool had had been worth 5 points and a card had been exchanged for it. There are therefore 78 points altogether. It is uncertain whether a player who makes no tricks has to surrender the Fool at the end of the hand.

The dealer gives twenty-five cards to the other two players and twenty-eight to himself, discarding three. He gives them out in five rounds of five cards to each (Zaini) or else he gives all the cards of each hand at once, and turns face up the last card dealt to each, including himself (Como). If any player has been dealt a hand without the Fool or any trumps, the deal is annulled and there is a new deal by the same dealer. The dealer may not discard Kings; nor may he discard trumps save if he has exactly three of them and discards all three (for this purpose the Fool counts as a trump). At the end of the hand each player marks as his score the difference, positive or negative, between 26 and the points on the

tricks he has won. It is uncertain whether the dealer has to surrender his discard if he makes no tricks. A rubber consists of three hands; each player totals his scores on the three hands; the winner is the player with the highest cumulative score, and is paid a fixed stake by each of the other two.

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Zaini also describes a form of the originally Piedmontese game of Mitigati as being played in Lombardy. This is our only evidence of its being played in that province, and it is unlikely that it is still played there.

#### 6.8 Mitigati (Lombard form, XX century)

There are three players. Points are reckoned as in game 6.3. That is to say, the cards have their standard values, save that the Fool (Matto) is worth only 4 points instead of 5. The Fool serves as Excuse, *without* exchange. The cards are counted in threes, but the player with two cards over counts them as if they were three, and the Fool is counted separately on its own; the effect is just as if the Fool had had its standard value of 5 points, and a card had been given in exchange for it. There are thus 78 points altogether. The dealer gives twenty-five cards to each player in five rounds of five to each, and keeps the last three for himself. But after the second, third and fourth rounds of the deal, when each player has respectively ten, fifteen and twenty cards, each looks at his cards and there is a pause to decide whether to continue the deal. Starting with the player to the right of the dealer, each either passes, indicating that he wishes to abandon the deal, or asks for it to continue. As soon as anyone asks to continue, the next five cards are dealt to each player and the same process is repeated. If at any stage all three pass, the hands are thrown in and there is a new deal by the same dealer; when the last round of the deal has taken place, there is no more opportunity to abandon the deal. The dealer then discards three cards; he may not discard Kings, and, as in game 6.3, may not discard trumps unless he has exactly three of them and discards all three (the Fool counting for this purpose as a trump). The player



to the right of the dealer leads to the first trick. Each player, just before playing a card to the first trick, may make any of the following declarations of cards he holds in his hand, for which each of the other two players immediately pays him a bonus:

*Tarocchi*: ten trumps, the Fool counting as a trump. These must be shown to the other two players; one holding more than ten trumps may select which ten trumps he shows, and need not mention his possession of more. Bonus: 5 game points.

*Onori*: any four or more of the seven honours. They do not need to be shown, nor is it necessary to say how many the player has altogether. Bonus: 5 game points.

*Mitigati di Tarocchi*: the XXI, I and Fool. Bonus: 10 game points.

*Mitigati di Re*: all four Kings. It is not allowed to make a declaration of Onori in addition. Bonus: 15 game points.

It is allowed to make more than one declaration, and the same cards may be used for different ones: e.g. the three cards of a *Mitigati di Tarocchi* may be used towards forming ten trumps for a *Tarocchi* declaration, or, with a King, for one of *Onori*. A combined declaration of *Mitigati di Tarocchi*, *Onori* and *Tarocchi* is called a *piatto* (plate), and one of *Mitigati di Tarocchi*, *Mitigati di Re* and *Tarocchi* a *piattone*.

At the end of each hand, each player receives from the others together as many game points as he has points above 26, or pay to the others together as many game points as he has points below 26.

Zaini recommends as a minimum for calling for the deal to be continued after receiving ten cards five trumps or three trumps and one honour, and as a minimum for calling for the deal to be continued after receiving fifteen cards the so-called *rottura* (break), namely one King and either the XXI, I or Fool, unless one has hopes of obtaining ten trumps.

## CHAPTER 7

### Tarok-l'Hombre

We saw in chapter 6 how in Lombardy the idea of bidding was imported from Ombre to create the game Tarocc'Ombre, and in chapter 8 we shall see the same development in the Permesso games of Piedmont. In Italy itself this innovation did not endure, but for the game of Tarot in general, the introduction of bidding was eventually to prove by far the most fruitful of the new developments we have looked at up to now. Hitherto, Tarot games had mostly been either four-handed ones with fixed partners or three-handed ones without partnerships. Although Grosstarock continued the three-handed individual format, the true future of Tarot games outside Italy lay in games with bidding; most of the games described in part III of this book are of this type. In these games, for each hand the players are formed into two temporary alliances determined by the bidding, rather than fixed partnerships as in the classic four-handed games.

In this chapter we are concerned with the earliest type of Tarot games with bidding that were played in Austria and Germany. These games were known to begin with as Tarok-l'Hombre, and their Italian terminology makes it clear that they were imported from Italy, very probably from Lombardy via Austria. So it is to Italian Tarocco players that we must give the credit for introducing bidding into Tarot games, even though they lost interest in it, and it was left to others to exploit its potentialities. In three-player Tarok l'Hombre, the declarer in each hand plays against a temporary alliance of two opponents. In the corresponding four-player game, the declarer may play alone against a three-player alliance, or

may call a King whose holder is then the declarer's partner for that hand against the other two players. The idea of calling a King is derived from Quadrille, a four-player variant of Ombre which was very popular in the XVIII century.

The name 'Tarok-l'Hombre' was, quite appropriately, reserved for the three-handed game. The first appearance of the game in the card-game books known to us is in *Der beliebte Weltmensch* (BW) published in Vienna in 1795. A very cursory notice of it was appended to the chapter on Taroc in the 1797 edition of *Das neue Königliche l'Hombre*, but the *Spiel-Almanach* (SA) published in Berlin in the same year devoted its entire section on Tarok to a long description of Tarok-l'Hombre, a description that was often reprinted word for word in later card-game books down to 1830. Many other German XIX century books on card games included Tarok-l'Hombre in their section on Tarok, the majority basing themselves on one or other of the two 1797 accounts.<sup>1</sup> The game must, however, have been played in Germany for a considerable time before 1797, since both accounts published in that year distinguish between an older and a more recent version, although BW gives only the older form. It is evident that even the older version had undergone some evolution before being challenged by its newer rival,

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<sup>1</sup> *Der Meister in allen Kartenspielen*, Hamburg and Altona, about 1810, mentions the game in one sentence. Julius Cäsar, *Neuster Spielalmanach für das Jahr 1800*, Berlin, 1800, has a revised and expanded version of the SA account. This is followed, largely or wholly, by *Neuestes Spielbuch*, Vienna, 1802; *Berliner Almanach für Karten-, Schach- und Pharospieler auf das Jahr 1804*, Berlin, 1804; J. Cäsar, *Spielalmanach für Karten, Schach, etc.*, Berlin, 1815; T.F. Müller, *Neuestes Spiel Taschenbuch*, Ulm, 1830; and S.A. Jorgensen, *Nyeste Dansk Spillebog*, Copenhagen, 1868. Books whose description of the game resembles the brief account in *Das neue königliche l'Hombre* are: *Taschenbuch aller Karten-, Kegel-, Brett- und Würfel-Spiele*, Lüneburg, about 1805; *L'Hombre Royal*, Vienna and Prague, 1824; *Het Kaartspelen Gemakkelijk Gemaakt*, Amsterdam, 1821; *Allgemeines Karten Spielbuch*, Vienna, 1846; and Alban von Hahn, *Buch der Spiele*, Leipzig, 1894. The *Neuestes allgemeines Spielbuch*, Vienna, 1829, describes five varieties of Tarok, of which Tarok-l'Hombre is the only one played with 78 cards; it incorporates the text of *L'Hombre Royal*, but adds a great deal more, much of which appears to be taken from a description of Grosstarock; it is followed by the *Neuestes Spielbuch*, Vienna, about 1830. Other books with accounts of Tarok-l'Hombre are: F. von Posert, *Zwei und siebenzig deutsche, französische und englische Kartenspiele*, Quedlinburg and Leipzig, 1864, *Deutsche, französische und englische Kartenspiele*, 3rd edition, Quedlinburg and Leipzig, 1873, and 9th edition, Leipzig, 1901; *Illustriertes allgemeines familien-Spielbuch*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1882; Carl König, *Neuster Spiel-Almanach*, Berlin, about 1892; S. Ulmann, *Das Buch der Familienspiele*, Vienna, about 1892; and Albert Stabenow, *Ausgewählte Kartenspiele*, Leipzig, 1908.

because the lowest contract, called '*a tre*', is never played out but simply paid for as if won. Obviously, no one would include such a rule in a newly invented game; *a tre* must originally have been a genuine bid which proved in practice to be too easy to win, so that it became customary for the opponents to concede it without play. There is no way of exactly dating the introduction of Tarok l'Hombre into Germany; but it can hardly have occurred much later than about 1770.

### 7.1 Tarok-l'Hombre (older version)

#### *Deal and discard*

There are three players. A 78-card French-suited pack is used. According to SA, deal and play are *clockwise*; save for those which reprint the SA account in full, other books leave the direction unspecified. The dealer gives twenty-five cards to each player, in five rounds of five cards each, and takes the last three cards for himself.<sup>2</sup> He then discards three cards, which count for him at the end of the round. He may never discard a King, the Scüs or a Tarok (trump).

#### *The bids*

There are in theory four possible positive bids, which are, in ascending order: *a tre* or *a trio*; *a due*; *a uno*; and *solo*. In each case, the declarer plays alone against the other two players, who are partners for that hand. If the final bid was 'Solo' there are no further complications. If the final bid was 'A uno', after discarding the declarer asks for any one card he does not have, and the player who has that card must surrender it in exchange for any card the declarer chooses to give him from his hand. A bid of 'A due' is like 'A uno' save that the declarer asks for any

<sup>2</sup> Von Abenstein's *Neuster Spielalmanach für Karten* (Berlin, 1820) mentions, as an aside within a description of Grosstarock, that the standard method of dealing in Tarok-l'Hombre is for the dealer to give a single batch of twenty-five cards to each of the other players and the last twenty-eight to the dealer. This is contrasted with the practice in Grosstarock, where the cards are dealt in fives. None of the specific descriptions of Tarok l'Hombre that we have seen mentions this practice of dealing the cards all at once.

two cards that he lacks, giving to the player or players who supply them a card from his hand in exchange for each.

Although a contract of 'A tre' is normally not played out, a paragraph added almost at the beginning to its reprint of the SA (1797) account, the *Neuster Spielalmanach* (NSa) (1800) explains the procedure and scoring for a bid of 'A tre', as if it were a normal bid. This paragraph, which was conceivably borrowed from an earlier account, confirms that the procedure for 'A tre' would then be as for the other bids, save that the declarer would then ask for three cards.

S. Ulmann, writing in the 1890s, says that the declarer must pay 10 game points to a player who supplies him with the XXI, and 5 game points to one who supplies him with any other card: this rule is imported from Tarok-Quadrille, and is not mentioned in the earlier accounts.

#### *Bidding procedure*

When the dealer has discarded, the bidding is opened by the player on his left, who must make a positive bid; he may say 'A tre' before even looking at his cards. The second player may now either pass or make a higher bid. Suppose that he makes a higher bid by saying 'A due'. The first player must now either pass or say '*Ich behalte es*' ('I hold'), meaning that he claims the prior right to become declarer at the level of *a due*. The second player must now in turn either pass or make a yet higher bid; if he does the latter, the first player again has the choice of passing or saying 'I hold'. They continue in this manner until one of them passes – either because the second player will go no higher or because the first player is unwilling to equal the second player's bid. If they have reached 'Solo', the bidding is over without the third player having had a chance to bid; otherwise, the third player (the dealer) must either pass or make a bid higher than any so far made. If the third player makes a positive bid, then whichever of the two earlier players has not yet passed has the right, if he wishes, to say 'I hold', or of course may pass; if he says 'I hold', then he and the third player fight it out as before. In every case, a player who comes earlier in the bidding order may claim

a prior right, over a subsequent player, to become declarer at any given level. Once a player has passed, he has no opportunity to re-enter the bidding.

The bidding procedure is rather carelessly described in the sources: it is not made clear whether a player, in making a positive bid, is always required to make the lowest one he legally may, or whether he can jump to a higher level than is necessary to remain in the bidding. The probable solution, for the early XIX century game, is that the winner of the auction can announce a contract at a higher level than his last bid; therefore there is no reason for a player to bid higher than necessary at any stage. Without this possibility for the declarer to increase the final contract, the practice explained by SA by which the opening bidder normally says 'A tre' before looking at his hand would be foolish: the player might pick up a powerful hand and would then be unable to increase his contract if the other players both passed.

The earliest account, BW, gives a rather confused procedure. The first player may pass or say '*Entro*'. If he says '*Entro*' and the other two then pass, he has the right either to take the payment for *a tre*, the hands being thrown in for a new deal, or to announce any of the higher contracts; if he does the latter, the other players in turn have the right to make a higher bid, despite having passed previously, the earlier bidder having the right to 'hold'.

A. Stabenow, writing in 1908, gives an additional rule that if the first player opens the bidding with 'A tre', he may subsequently say 'I hold' to 'A due' and to 'A uno', but not to 'Solo'. Stabenow is not just copying earlier accounts; for example he gives German names (*Dreier, Zweier, Einer*) for the three lowest bids, so providing testimony that the game was still played at the beginning of the XX century. We should probably interpret him as meaning that it is possible to open the bidding at any level – at any rate with 'Solo', which will also end the bidding – and to overcall with a jump of one or two levels, but that the declarer may play only at the level of his last bid.

*Play*

If the opening bidder said 'A tre' and the other two both passed, the hands are thrown in, and there is a new deal by the next dealer. Otherwise, as soon as any exchange of cards required by the bid is complete, the player to the dealer's left leads to the first trick. The hands are played out under the usual rules, the cards ranking in their original order. The two opponents of the declarer keep in one pile the cards they win in tricks. The Scüs serves as Excuse with exchange. The exchange takes place immediately if possible, otherwise as soon as the player's side has won a trick. If the declarer makes *Tout*, that is, wins all the tricks, the opponents must surrender the Scüs to him at the end of the hand. Provided that he has made a trick, a player can take back the Scüs even if he plays it to the last trick. None of the sources says whether the Scüs can be led to a trick, or, if so, what rule applies when it is. Note that there are no declarations and no Pagat ultimo bonus.

*Scoring*

At the end of the hand, the cards are counted in threes, the counting cards having their standard values, so that there are 78 points altogether. In order to win, the declarer must have 40 points or more on the cards he has won in tricks, otherwise he loses. BW, SA and the accounts that follow SA describe the result in which the declarer and opponents take 39 points each as *remis*, but whatever the terminology, all are agreed that a declarer who makes 39 points pays the minimum sum (the so called 'consolation') to each opponent.

The system of payment given in SA (1797) and NSa (1800) is as follows. If the declarer wins *a tre*, each opponent pays him 10 game points (the 'consolation') plus the number of card points he has above 39; if he wins *a due*, he is paid twice this sum; if he wins *a uno*, three times this sum; and if *solo*, six times this sum. If the declarer makes 39 or fewer card points, he likewise pays to each opponent 10 game points plus the number of card points (if any) by which he is short of 39, multiplied by 2 if he was playing *a due*, by 3 if he was playing *a*

*uno* and by 6 if he was playing *solo*. For example, if the declarer plays *a uno* and makes 45 card points, each opponent pays him 48 game points, which is three times (10 + 6), since he has 6 card points above 39; if he makes only 37 card points, two below 39, he must pay 36 game points, i.e. three times (10 + 2), to each opponent. In practice, an *a tre* game is not played out; the declarer is then presumed to have won minimally, and is paid just 10 game points by each opponent. If the declarer makes *Tout*, he is paid 200 game points by each opponent if he was playing *a due*, 300 if *a uno* and 600 if *solo*.

There are many slight variations on this scoring system. BW reckons the payments for win or loss as 5 game points (consolation) plus the excess or deficit as against 39 points, multiplied by 2 *a due*, by 3 *a uno* and by 4 *solo*: it gives no special payment for *Tout*. SA says that some players prefer to add the above payments for *Tout* to the payments reckoned in the usual way. Many of the later accounts say that the excess or deficit of card points is to be reckoned from 40, so that for example a declarer making 42 points *a due* is to be paid 24 and not 26 game points by each opponent. Carl König, writing in the 1890s, adds to this that for a win when playing *solo*, a declarer is paid by each opponent only 36 game points plus six times the number of points he has above 40, and similarly when he loses. Posert, in a work of 1864, says that some players reduce the payment for *Tout* to 50 game points *a due*, 100 *a uno* and 150 *solo*; but this must be meant to be in addition to the ordinary payment, since otherwise it would be more profitable to lose one trick than to win them all.

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The 'later' form of Tarok-l'Hombre, mentioned already in both 1797 accounts, and in SA designated a more recent form, was later only in date of invention. To judge by the card-game books, both continued to be played throughout the XIX century, and that this is not a mere result of the plagiarism of compilers of card-game books is made probable by the fact that both are still mentioned by Stabenow and by Ulmann, who give signs of having first-hand



knowledge. The later form did not differ greatly from the earlier, and was, perhaps, not so good a game – certainly SA insisted that it was the easier of the two – but the point on which it differed was a crucial innovation. Hitherto, in all Tarot games in which any player had the privilege of taking additional cards and discarding, this privilege had always belonged to the dealer. Now it was to become one of the incentives to bid: the extra cards were to go to the declarer, and the declarer, not the dealer, was to have the advantage of the discard. The term *Skat*, previously used for the discard, was transferred to the additional cards, laid aside until the bidding was completed.

The importance of this change lay in the opportunities it created for devising new types of bid. The transference of Ombre bidding to Tarot was not straightforward, for in Ombre only twenty-seven of the forty cards are dealt out to the players, and many of the bids are distinguished from one another by what happens to the remaining talon of thirteen cards. At first it did not occur to anybody that anything like the same principle could be applied to Tarot games; and even when the crucial step was taken of assigning the *Skat* according to the result of the bidding rather than always giving it to the dealer, it was not at first exploited. In the later form of Tarok-l'Hombre the *Skat* goes to the declarer irrespective of his bid. But, once this step had been taken, the possibility was open of distinguishing different bids according to the number of cards from the *Skat* the declarer could take for himself, rather than on the principle used in Tarok-l'Hombre and in Italian Permesso and Tarocc'Ombre whereby the declarer asks for various numbers of cards from the other players. This idea was then much imitated in games played with the regular pack, especially in Germany; for an example, we do not have to look further than the German national game of *Skat*, named after this very feature.

## 7.2 Tarok-l'Hombre (later version)

All is as in the older version, with the following exceptions. The dealer takes the top three cards from the pack and lays them face down upon the table. He then gives twenty-five cards to each player in five rounds of five cards each. Bidding begins as soon as the deal is completed. The bid of 'A tre' is entirely suppressed, and the bid of 'A due' treated like that of 'A tre' in the older game: that is to say, if the first player says 'A due' and the other two pass, the hands are thrown in, the first player is paid 20 game points by each of the other two, and there is a new deal by the next dealer. If a bid of 'A uno' or 'Solo' is made, the declarer takes the three cards in the middle of the table, called the *Skat*, without showing them to the others, adds them to his hand, and then discards three cards face down, with the same restrictions as applied to the dealer's discard in the older version of the game; the three discarded cards count to the declarer at the end of the hand. After this, if he bid 'A uno', he asks for a single card that he lacks, giving a low card in exchange for it as before. Play then proceeds as in the older version. The scoring is exactly the same, save that, when the declarer plays *solo*, the basic score is multiplied by 5, not by 6. *Tout* is paid 300 game points by each when made *a uno*, and 500 game points when made *solo*. The same remarks about minor variations in scoring apply here as to the older version.

In one text, the *Allgemeines Karten Spielbuch*, published in Vienna in 1846, it is mentioned that some players add a Misere bid to Tarok-l'Hombre (whether to the older or the later version of the game is not made clear), regarding it as overbidding Solo: the player contracts to make no tricks and is paid the rather small sum of 26 game points by each opponent if he succeeds, and pays them the same sum if he fails. This practice cannot have been widespread.

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In the accounts of Tarok-l'Hombre mentioned so far, no provision is made for declarations or for a bonus for making the Pagat ultimo. In the *Neuestes allgemeines Spielbuch*, published in Vienna in 1829, on the other hand, there is a

section on Tarok, called 'Tarok in various forms', which begins with Tarok-l'Hombre; Tarok-l'Hombre is the only form of Tarok played with the full 78-card pack that it recognises, the other four forms that it describes being of the later type, played with only 54 or 42 cards, that will be the subject of Part III of this book. The game of Tarok l'Hombre described in this work incorporates many features of the classic three-handed game. Since many paragraphs of the account appear to be borrowed from previous accounts of the classic game, it is conceivable that the form thus described had no real existence, but was merely the product of the compiler's running together the descriptions of two distinct games. But it is also possible that such a hybrid form was played in Austria, perhaps as the last Tarok game to be played with 78 cards, after the classic game, in its pure form, had died out.

### 7.3 Tarok-l'Hombre with declarations

This may be played either as in the older version 7.1 or the later version 7.2 described above, with the following exceptions. If, when the version 7.1 is played, the dealer has exactly three Taroks including the Pagat, he may discard all three; some also allow him to discard the Scüs, the Pagat and one other Tarok, if he then has no Taroks remaining in his hand. In no other case may he discard a Tarok; but some play that the deal is annulled if any player has only one or two Taroks in his hand.

Before play begins, and presumably after the bidding has taken place, the following declarations may be made:

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Three Matadors ( <i>Mangur</i> or XXI, Pagat and Scüs) | 10 game points |
| Ten Taroks   | 10 game points |
| Cavallerie (all four court cards of one suit)          | 4 game points. |

It is not said whether the declared cards need to be shown. Some do not recognise a declaration of ten Taroks; some allot 20 game points to a declaration of the XXI, Pagat and Scüs. Some recognise seven Kings, consisting of the three

Matadors and the four natural Kings; some allow a declaration of more than three Matadors, which may be Matadors from below, and in this case the Scüs may substitute for a missing Matador other than the XXI or the Pagat. These latter possibilities are only cursorily mentioned and not explained. Presumably a player making a declaration is paid by each of the other two, irrespective of who is the successful bidder.

If the older version of the game is played, there is not even a nominal bid of *a tre*; and, if the later version is played, there is not even a nominal bid of *a due* (here cited as *a duo*).

The Scüs must be played before the last three tricks. A player who wins the last trick with the Pagat is awarded 10 game points, or, by agreement, some higher premium. The implication seems to be that, when one of the opponents of the declarer makes the Pagat ultimo, he is paid by his partner as well as by the declarer, rather than the declarer's paying both opponents; but this is not made explicit. A player who loses the Pagat pays 5 game points to each of the other two players, or 10 if he loses it in the last trick; this rule is stated expressly in this form, ruling out the possibility that each opponent pays the declarer when the latter captures the Pagat.

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There was also a four-handed game with bids closely modelled upon those of Quadrille, the very popular four-handed version of Ombre. In the early texts, it is always compared with Quadrille, and we may conveniently call it Tarok-Quadrille, though the name in just this form does not appear in the sources. It is first mentioned in the 1783 edition of *Das neue Königliche l'Hombre* (KH), that is, in an earlier edition than that which first describes Tarok-l'Hombre; it is also described in BW (Vienna, 1795), which contained the earliest account of Tarok-l'Hombre. Unlike Tarok l'Hombre, Tarok-Quadrille was probably not based on any Italian original such as *Chiamare il Re* (8.20), but was an independent application of Quadrille bidding to Tarok. It figures in the two Dutch card-game

books of 1821 and 1836, whose accounts of Tarok are manifestly dependent on KH, but it does not appear often in the German books. There is an account of it in the *Neustes Spielbuch* (NS), Leipzig, 1840, newly written but in part derived from KH; and it appears again in some later works, such as the encyclopaedias of von Alvensleben and of Friedrich Anton and in Ulmann's *Buch der Familienspiele* and *Illustriertes Wiener Tarokbuch*. Anton, however, was copying von Alvensleben, who was, in this instance, copying NS (1840), so their testimony is of little value. Ulmann is a much more reliable witness, but we are not convinced, in this case, that he was personally familiar with the game he was describing. In fact, we are inclined to think that Tarok-Quadrille probably died out by 1850 or thereabouts. It has, however, a number of unusual and interesting features.

#### 7.4 Tarok-Quadrille

##### *Deal and discard*

There are four players, each playing for themselves, but forming temporary partnerships, according to the bidding, for each hand. A 78-card French-suited pack is used, from which the Aces of Spades and Clubs are removed, to make a 76-card pack. The direction of deal and play will here be assumed to be anticlockwise, though this is not explicitly stated. The dealer gives eighteen cards to each player, in two rounds of five each followed by two rounds of four each, starting with the player on his right; in the last round, he takes the last four cards for himself and discards four, which count to him or to his side at the end of the round. He may not discard Kings, the XXI, the Pagat or the Scüs.

##### *Declarations*

When the dealer has discarded, the player on the dealer's right makes any declarations he chooses and is able to make. The other players then do so in turn.

Possible declarations are:

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Ten Taroks <sup>3</sup>  | 10 game points.    |
| A complete Cavallerie<br>(all four court cards of one suit)            | 10 game points.    |
| A half Cavallerie<br>(any three court cards of one suit with the Scüs) | 5 game points.     |
| All four Kings   | 10 game points.    |
| Three or more Matadors (from above)                                    | 10 + 5 game points |

As in Chapters 3 and 4, the first three Matadors are the XXI, Pagat and Scüs; further Matadors consist of the XX, XIX and so on down in unbroken sequence. 10 game points are scored for three Matadors plus 5 game points for each Matador in excess of three.

KH (1783) recognises a further declaration of three Kings and the Scüs, for 5 game points, but BW (1795) and NS (1840) rule this out. KH probably intends all declared cards to be shown; NS does not require ten Taroks to be shown, but the player declaring them must state whether or not he has the Pagat. He need not say whether he in fact has more than ten Taroks. Each player making a declaration is paid its value by each of the other three players at the end of the round of declarations.

### Bidding

There are three positive bids, which are, in ascending order: *Frage* ('I ask'); *Mediateur* or *Kauf*; and Solo. No player is obliged to bid, but a player who has passed cannot re-enter the bidding. The bidding is opened by the player on the dealer's right as soon as the declarations have been made and paid for<sup>4</sup>. The bidding procedure is not clearly explained, but probably a player does not have the right to 'hold' a subsequent bid, that is, to claim a prior right to become declarer at that level; the bidding simply goes round in rotation, each player who has not yet passed having either to pass or make a higher bid.

<sup>3</sup> By analogy with other games, it is probable that a player holding nine Taroks and the Scüs may declare ten Taroks, but this is not expressly stated.

<sup>4</sup> Alone of the sources, Ulmann places the declarations *after* the bidding, which makes a great difference; but this may be a mere mistake on his part.

If the declarer has bid *Frage*, then, when the bidding is over, he 'calls' a King that he does not have: the player who holds that King becomes his partner, but does not announce the fact. No provision is made for the case in which the declarer has all four Kings; perhaps a player with all four Kings may not bid *Frage*, or perhaps he can call a Queen. If the declarer has bid *Mediateur*, he will play alone against the other three. Before play begins, he may ask for any one card, other than the *Scüs*, which he does not have. The player who has it must surrender it, and receive in exchange any card from the declarer's hand that the declarer chooses. In addition, the declarer must pay to the person who supplies the card 10 game points if he has asked for the *XXI*, or 5 game points for any other card. *KH* and *BW* allow the declarer, if he wishes, to ask for two cards, paying for both, but *NS* does not allow this. If the declarer has bid *Solo*, he plays alone against the other three without being able to purchase a card.

### *Play*

When the preliminaries are completed, the player to the dealer's right leads to the first trick, and the hands are played out according to the usual rules, the cards ranking in their original order. The *Scüs* serves as *Excuse*, with exchange. When *Mediateur* or *Solo* was bid, the three opponents keep together the cards they win in tricks; when *Frage* was bid, each player keeps his cards separately, since it is not known to all who the declarer's partner is. .

### *Scoring*

At the end of the hand, each side reckons the points it has gained on cards won in tricks. The cards are counted individually, assigning to the counting cards their standard values and 1 point to each empty card. There are thus 128 points altogether, and if either side has more than 64 points, they win game points from the other side equal to the number of card points they have above 64<sup>5</sup>. If *Frage*

<sup>5</sup> In *KH*, the total number of points is correctly given as 128, and a bid is explained as a contract to make, with one's partner, if any, at least half the points. It is later said, however, that the declarer, with his partner, if he has one, will receive as many game points as he has points above 60, or pay

was bid, each member of the losing side pays the appropriate amount to one member of the winning side; if *Mediateur* or *Solo* was bid, the declarer pays this amount to or receives it from each of the three opponents. If both sides have made 64 points, neither pays the other. If a player who has declared three or more *Matadors* becomes the declarer with a *Frage* bid, then he and his partner may be able to claim a further payment for *Matadors* at the end of the hand. This will happen if, by taking together the high *Taroks* they originally held in their two hands (which will necessarily be included in the cards they win in tricks) they can form a longer sequence of *Matadors* than that which was originally declared. They then receive, at the end of the hand, 5 game points for each additional *Matador* not included in the original declaration. Suppose, for instance, a player declares four *Matadors*, having the XXI, *Pagat*, *Scüs* and XX, for which he is paid 15 game points by each of the other three players. He later becomes declarer with a *Frage* bid, and his partner proves to have the XIX and XVII, while he himself has the XVIII and XVI. They can then jointly claim payment, at the end of the hand, for four more *Matadors*; each of them will receive, from one opponent, 20 game points.

If a player has none of the first three *Matadors* in his original hand, but nevertheless undertakes a *Mediateur* or (as is unlikely) a *Solo* bid, he is liable to pay the opponents an additional penalty of 10 game points for the three *Matadors* if he fails to capture the *Pagat*; this applies even if, playing *Mediateur*, he asked for the XXI. (Presumably it also applies if he asked for the *Pagat* but failed to bring it home.) It is not stated whether he also has to pay for any additional *Matadors* the opponents may have between them. On the other hand, if the declarer at *Mediateur* or *Solo* originally had the XXI and the *Scüs*, and captures the *Pagat* in the course of play, he may at the end of the round claim from each

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as many as he has below 60. Plainly, this '60' is a misprint for '64'; but the authors of many later texts, spotting the discrepancy, have corrected it in the wrong way, by stating quite falsely that the total number of points is 120. The result is baffling if one does not know how the mistake arose.



opponent payment for as many Matadors as he has in the cards he has won in tricks.

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From the Austrian literature on Tarok, one would assume that Tarok games using more than 54 cards had died out there in the early XX century. However, Piatnik of Vienna kept their 78-card Großtarock pack (catalogue number 1938) in print at least until the 1980's, and in 1992, Mag. Strehl of Piatnik responded to a query from card game researcher Remigius Geiser with the information that in recent times these cards had been sold exclusively in the Stubai valley, south-west of Innsbruck. Fortunately it proved possible to contact a few surviving players in Fulpmes and Telfes and establish that the game played there is a kind of Tarok l'Hombre using 66 cards<sup>6</sup>. This unexpectedly provided at the same time a likely explanation of the 66-card Tyrolean Tarock packs, several examples of which are known from the late XIX century. These packs, with a variety of designs from different makers, are French-suited with the usual Tarocks and court cards, plus the numerals from 4 to 10 in the black suits and from Ace to 7 in the red suits.

The Stubai valley game is known in the local dialect as *Droggn*, which is the equivalent of *Tarockieren* (to play Tarock). It has strong similarities to the later form of Tarok l'Hombre (7.2), though the pack is shortened, and there is now the possibility to announce *Pagat ultimo* or *Tout*. It is interesting that some of the players call the game "*Französisches Tarock*" (French Tarock), to distinguish it from the 54-card Austrian Tarock games. They claim that it was brought to the Tyrol by French troops in the Napoleonic wars, at the time of Andreas Hofer. Initially one would be tempted to dismiss this as fantasy, given that people in the Tyrol have a strong tendency to connect everything possible

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<sup>6</sup> John McLeod and Remigius Geiser: *Stubai Droggn and Dobbm – two living fossils of the Austrian card game landscape* (The Playing-Card, Vol XXVII No 6, May/June 1999, pp269-276 and Vol XXVIII No 1, July/August 1999, pp40-49)

with their national hero Andreas Hofer. However, given that the French Tarot games of the XIX and XX century are themselves developments of Tarok l'Hombre, there is the possibility that a French connection could exist. Some similarities to French games can be observed: Stubai Droggn has the same bids as Three-handed Burgundy Tarot (9.3) and both games, unlike most German Tarok games, allow trumps to be discarded at will. The Pagat in Droggn is called "*dar Kloane*" (= der Kleine, the small one), equivalent to the French term "*le petit*", and one term for trumps is "*Adudde*", evidently a corruption of French "atouts"; Droggn adopts the rule, found in no other game outside France, that the Fool can win the last trick if the holder has already won all the previous tricks. Other players, however, contend that Droggn was imported from northern Italy by Italian door-to-door salesmen ("*kraxn-drogar*") who used to sell their goods in the Tyrol. This idea also could also contain a grain of truth given our theory that Tarok l'Hombre originally came to Austria from Lombardy, though it has clearly been subject to various influences and development since its arrival. The description of Droggn that follows is based on a visit by Remigius Geiser and one of us to Telfes and Fulpmes in 1996, where over a period of three days we took part in some games and interviewed several players. The accounts of the game that they gave were reasonably consistent, though there are a few discrepancies and uncertainties, which we shall document in footnotes. Some of these discrepancies certainly reflect genuine variations in the game between different circles of players, while a few may be due to imperfect recollection, since none of our informants had had the opportunity to play the game for several years prior to our visit.

### 7.5 Droggn (Stubai valley, Tyrol, XX century)

#### *Players, Cards and Terminology*

There are three active players, but four people can take part, in which case the dealer "takes a holiday", receiving no cards and taking no part in the bidding and

play of the hand. A 66-card French-suited Tarock pack is used<sup>7</sup>. Packs of this type were available until the early XX century, but in more recent times the Piatnik 78-card Großtarock was used, the 3 lowest cards of each suit being thrown out. The pack therefore contains 21 trumps (*Adudder* or *Triumpfe*), the Fool (*Gstieß*) and 11 cards in each suit, ranking in the original order, the numeral cards running from 10 to 4 (low) in the black suits and ace to 7 (low) in red. The XXI is known as *der Mond* (the moon) or *der Große* (the big one) and the I is *der Pagat* is *dar Kloane* (the small one). The King of a suit is sometimes known as *der Honor* – only the Kings are called honours in this game, not the XXI, I or *Gstieß*. Other picture cards in the suits are called *Mandlen* (little people): the Queen is *de Dam*, the Cavalier is *der Reiter* and the Jack is *dar Bua*. Numeral cards in the suits are *laare Karten* (empty cards). The word for a long suit is *der Ritt*, and *der Fuchs* (the fox) is a suit singleton other than a king in the declarer's hand. Leading to a trick is known as *werfen*.

### Deal

The deal and play are clockwise. The cards are dealt in three rounds of seven cards<sup>8</sup>, each player receiving 21 cards in all. The last three cards are placed face down in the centre to form the talon. The turn to deal does not rotate: instead, the dealer for each hand is the declarer from the previous hand. This means that in the 4-player game, the players do not sit out equally often, but each player continues to play until he becomes declarer, after which he sits out for one hand. Any player may end the session by announcing that the next declarer will deal the first of the last three hands: this is a rather convoluted way of saying that the session will end after four more deals.

<sup>7</sup> One player said that he had also played the game with 78 cards. The deal is then in fives and 39 card points are needed by the declarer to win the game. Otherwise the rules are the same (probably Super Mord should score 169).

<sup>8</sup> The talon may be dealt in the middle rather than at the end of the deal - for example after the second batch of 7 cards to each player. One player said that the deal could also be in batches of 5-5-5-3-3-talon.

*Bidding*

Starting with the player to dealer's left, and continuing clockwise, each player has just one opportunity to bid. The lowest bid is an *Ansager*, announced by saying 'i sog on' or simply 'hinein'. If this is the final bid, the declarer will take the three talon cards, discarding three, and also "buy" a card by asking for a specific card, which must be surrendered by the opponent who holds it, the declarer giving a card of his choice in exchange. The second bid is *Solo*, which is the same as *Ansager* save that the declarer does not buy a card. Above *Solo* is *Super*, in which the declarer neither takes the talon nor buys a card. The highest bid of all is the extremely rare *Super Mord*, which is a *Super* in which the declarer undertakes to win every trick. A player who does not wish to bid, when there has not yet been a positive bid, says 'weiter'. Once a player has bid, subsequent players who have yet to speak may either bid higher or pass by saying 'gut'. Note that players cannot increase their bids, so a player who wishes, for example, to play *Solo* or *Super* should bid it at the first opportunity. If everyone says 'weiter', the cards are thrown in and the same player deals again – this is quite unusual, but happens occasionally.

*Talon exchange and buying*

If the contract is an *Ansager* or a *Solo*, the declarer takes the talon cards without showing them<sup>9</sup> and discards three cards face down. It is illegal to discard the *Gstieß*, *Mond* or *Pagat*. If a king is discarded a trump must be discarded with it. Apart from these restrictions, it is legal to discard any cards, including trumps. The discard of a trump, with or without a king, is not announced to the other players. If the bid is an *Ansager*, the declarer also places a fourth card face-down in the centre of the table, separate from the talon, asks the opponents for a specific card – for example a King or the *Mond*. The opponent who has this card gives it to the declarer and takes the fourth face-down card in exchange. If the

<sup>9</sup> Some play that in an *Ansager*, the declarer exposes the talon before picking it up, but in a *Solo* it is picked up without showing it.

declarer in an Ansager forgets to buy a card, or try to buy a card that is already in his hand or discard, the opportunity to buy lapses, but the game is still scored as an Ansager, not a Solo. In a Super (or Super Mord) the talon is left face down and its value counts with the declarer's tricks.

The declarer may earn an extra bonus by winning the last trick with the Pagat. The bonus is doubled if the intention to win it is announced in advance by placing the Pagat face-up on the table beside the talon before the lead to the first trick. The word used for laying out the Pagat in this way is *auslegen*. In the case of a Super Mord, if the declarer holds the Gstieß, this can be used to win the last trick, provided that the declarer has won all the previous tricks and there are no other trumps in the last trick. In this case the Gstieß must be laid out beside the talon before the lead to the first trick. The Gstieß and the Pagat cannot both be laid out together. Having finished exchanging, discarding, buying, and laying out the Pagat or Gstieß if appropriate, the declarer says '*ich liege*'.

### *Announcements*

After the declarer has said '*ich liege*', the opponents have the opportunity to double the score for the game (and the Pagat if laid out). This is called *schießen*, or more often *einen Schwachen geben*. First the opponent to declarer's left either passes by saying '*gut*' or '*komm*', or doubles the stake by saying '*an Schwochn*'. If the first opponent passes, the second opponent has the same options. At this stage it is also possible for a defender to lay out the Pagat, thus undertaking to win the last trick with it. If either opponent has doubled, the declarer has the chance to redouble (*Retour*), after which the either opponents can double again with a further *Retour*, and this alternate doubling by declarer and opponents can in theory continue without limit, until one side declares by saying '*gut*' that they do not wish to double further. In practice it is rare to go beyond a *Schwacher* and the first *Retour*. Any doubling affects the payments between the declarer and both opponents equally. Note also that a *Schwacher* and all *Retours* apply to the game and to the bonus for any laid out Pagat. Although the game and the Pagat

bonus are scored independently (one may be won and the other lost), it is not possible to double them separately.

### Play

Play is clockwise, under the usual rules, except that it is the declarer who leads to the first trick. The Gstieß serves as excuse without exchange<sup>10</sup>. If it is led to a trick, the second player may play any card, and this determines the suit (or trumps) to be followed by the third. If the Pagat was laid out, the holder is not allowed to play it as long as there is a legal alternative; if possible the Pagat must be kept until the last trick. If the Pagat was not laid out, but is played to the last trick, it is customary to draw attention to this by saying '*ultimo*'. Some but not all play that if the declarer has the lead to the second to last trick, holds the Pagat and the Gstieß, and there are no other trumps remaining in play, the declarer can play these two cards together saying '*Kleiner und Gstieß Ultimo*', winning both tricks and a bonus.

The opponents keep the tricks they have won together in a common pile. Players are allowed to look back through the previous tricks taken by their side, but not at the other side's tricks. In a *Super* or *Super Mord*, no one is allowed to look at the talon until the end of play, so it must be kept separately from the declarer's tricks.

### Scoring

At the end of the play, each side counts the card points in the tricks it has won, the talon or discard counting with the declarer's tricks. The cards have the usual values and are counted in threes, so that there are 74 points in all. Since no card is given in exchange for the Gstieß, if the trick to which it was played was won by the opposing side, the side that played the Gstieß will have a single card left over, which counts as one point less than its nominal value, and the other side will have

<sup>10</sup> One player said that it is illegal to play the Gstieß to the last trick. The others said that the Gstieß can be played to the last trick, but that it is never sensible to do so.

one group of only two cards, which counts as though it were a full group of three. The basic scores are 20 game points for Ansager, 40 for Solo and 80 for Super. The declarer needs at least 37 points to win<sup>11</sup>, and then receives the basic score plus the excess of his card points above 37. If the declarer has 36 or fewer card points he loses the basic score for the bid plus the number of card points by which he is below 37.

Independently of the above scores, further game points are won or lost if the Pagat was laid out, captured or played to the last trick. If the Pagat was not laid out, but is captured by the declarer from the defenders or by the defenders from the declarer before the last trick, the side which captures the Pagat wins 5 game points for this. If the Pagat was not laid out but is played to the last trick, the side which played the Pagat wins 10 game points if the Pagat wins the trick, but loses 10 game points if it is beaten by another trump (even if the trick is won by the Pagat player's partner). If "Kleiner und Gstieß ultimo" is allowed, the score for it is 20 points, replacing the score for the Pagat ultimo. If the Pagat was laid out, the side that held it wins 20 game points if it for wins the last trick with it, but loses 20 game points if it does not win the last trick, either because it is beaten by a higher trump, or because it was forced out earlier.

The score for Super Mord is 167 game points. This is equivalent to 80 for Super plus 37 for overshoot points plus a bonus of 50. If the Pagat or Gstieß was laid out, it is worth an extra 20, making 187 game points. If the declarer fails to win every trick, the entire 167 or 187 game points are lost. When Super Mord is played, there is no score for capturing the Pagat, nor for winning the last trick with it if it is not laid out. If the Pagat is laid out and a trick is lost, the play ends and 187 points are lost even if the bidder would have been able to win the last

<sup>11</sup> One informant said that if the declarer and opponents have 37 points each, it is a tie, and the declarer neither wins nor loses any game points.

trick with the Pagat<sup>12</sup>. If the declarer wins every trick without having announced Mord, this is called a Match. The declarer scores the basic game value plus 37 points – this is simply the score for taking all the cards, including the Gstieß.

If there was a Schwacher, Retour, etc., the points for the game, the difference from 37 and the laid out Pagat (or Gstieß) if any are all doubled the appropriate number of times. The points for winning or losing the Pagat in the last trick, or for capturing the Pagat earlier, are not affected.

The defenders always score equally, and if there are four players, the dealer also scores with the defenders. When scoring on paper (as is usual), this is achieved simply by adding or subtracting the appropriate amount from the declarer's cumulative score. At the end of the session, there is a payment between each pair of players proportional to the difference between their scores. The usual stake is 10 or 50 Groschen per point.

### *Tactics*

It is not necessary for the declarer to have a large number of trumps; five-point cards are more important – especially Kings. Declarer will often buy a missing King, or the XXI holding the Kings of all his suits. Long trumps are an added advantage to declarer of course, and may make it worthwhile to buy the Pagat and lay it out or at least aim to win the last trick with it. A great danger for the declarer is that of losing tricks in the suits to one defender after the other defender has run out of both that suit and trumps and can throw counting cards on the tricks. The declarer will therefore often start by leading from a long suit, aiming to dispose of all his losers in that suit while the opponents still have

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<sup>12</sup> Super Mord is a once in a lifetime bid, and we did not establish for certain which of the various Pagat scores can be combined with it. We were told that the Pagat or Gstieß can be laid out, increasing the score from 167 to 187, and the main description gives the simplest rule consistent with this – that the entire 167 or 187 points are won or lost as a whole, and there are no further separate scores associated with the Pagat. An alternative, though less likely, interpretation would be that winning all the tricks is worth 167, and that all the normal Pagat bonuses apply in addition to this. In that case, for example, a declarer who did not hold the Pagat would in fact win 172 including the 5 for catching the Pagat, and a declarer who caught the Pagat despite losing some other trick would lose only 162.



trumps. Conversely, it can sometimes be right for the defenders to lead trumps, especially when the trumps are very unequally distributed between them. When the declarer leads from a long suit, the defenders should not release their pictures in that suit prematurely, especially when the suit is unequally divided between the defenders.

Often the defenders will try various suits, aiming to locate declarer's void and then keep leading that suit so as to weaken declarer's trump holding. The defenders should always try to keep the declarer in the middle, so declarer's right hand opponent should beat the other defender's cards when practical. It is far better for the defence if the declarer plays second to a trick rather than last, especially when the defenders begin to attack a new suit. When the defenders attack a new suit, it is often difficult for them to know whether to play the King, hoping to win, or to play low cards hoping that the declarer has to trump. A defender who is short in trumps will often prefer to hold back Kings and Queens, as these can more safely be thrown on partner's trump tricks later. The declarer can sometimes exploit this by keeping a single card in a suit (a fox), which may be lost cheaply or even win a trick.

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## CHAPTER 8

### Tarot in Piedmont and Savoy

The *Discorso* given by Francesco Piscina da Carmagnola in 1565 to the recently founded University of Monte Regale (now Mondovì) is evidence that the game of Tarot was known in Piedmont by the mid-XVI century. The cards were, however, known there as early as 1505: the document from Avignon mentioned on page 17 records an exchange between the Avignon cardmaker Jean Fort and two men in Pinerolo, one a paper manufacturer and the other, Bernardine Touque, a cardmaker. Pinerolo was famous at the time for its paper, and Fort is to send woodblocks for printing cards, two gross of packs of the Lyons type, 48 Tarot packs, together with pig bristle and colours in exchange for paper. Presumably Tarot cards were not only known but made in Pinerolo at that time. Piedmont is the one region of Italy that appears to have been influenced by more than one of the three original Tarot traditions. From Piscina's *Discorso* it is apparent that it was influenced, as one would expect, by the trump order of neighbouring Lombardy, including the characteristic Lombard placing of Temperance between Death and the Devil;<sup>1</sup> and descriptions of Piedmontese games from the XVIII century show that it was likewise influenced by Milanese modes of play. But both sources indicate, surprisingly, a strong influence from Bologna. The trump order given by Piscina, without attaching numbers to the trumps, differs from the

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from the two exceptions mentioned, the trump order given by Piscina coincides with that given in a poem written about 1570, describing ladies at the court of Pavia, and also with that of the pack by Jacques Viéville (see below). This order differs slightly but significantly from that in the Tarot de Marseille; trumps VII to XI run as follows in the two orders:

Lombard one in two remarkable respects. First, the highest trump is the Angel, followed immediately by the World; and this is characteristic of the Bolognese trump order, as also of that observed in Florence. In the Lombard order, it was from the beginning, and remained ever after, the other way round, with the World as the highest trump, followed by the Angel. (In the Ferrarese order, the World was again the highest trump, but it was followed by Justice and only then by the Angel.) Secondly, the four trumps immediately higher than the Bagatto, namely the Pope, Popess, Emperor and Empress, ranked equal. This was otherwise an exclusively Bolognese characteristic, these four cards being collectively known in the Bolognese game as *Papi* (Popes); if more than one was played to a trick, that played last beat the others. (This remains a feature of the Bolognese game, but since 1725 the four 'Popes' have been replaced by *Mori* or Moors.)

The first of these two features has been obstinately preserved in Piedmont to this day. In the form of pack now used, the Tarocco piemontese, which uses a pattern descended from the French Tarot de Marseille, the World is clearly numbered 21 and the Angel 20; but in all Piedmontese games the Angel is treated as higher than the World, and has inherited the point-value of 5 points attached in Lombardy (and in all games outside Italy) to the World; in Piedmont the World has no special point-value. The second feature is not still universally observed in Piedmont; but, as we shall see, it prevailed in games played in Savoy in the XVIII century (games 8.25 and 8.26 – see p. 172), in ones played in Nice in 1930 (games 8.43 and 8.44), and prevails to this day in ones played in the Asti region of Piedmont (games 8.40, 8.41 and 8.42).

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Piscina & Viéville

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| the Old Man | XI   |
| the Wheel   | X    |
| Strength    | VIII |
| the Chariot | VIII |
| Justice     | VII  |

Tarot de Marseille

|             |
|-------------|
| Strength    |
| the Wheel   |
| the Hermit  |
| Justice     |
| the Chariot |

The Old Man corresponds to the Hermit. The Tarot de Marseille order may have been derived from that observed in Milan itself, but has no known Italian attestation. See pp. 111-112.

These facts strongly suggest that Tarot was first introduced into Piedmont from Bologna, perhaps early in the XVI century, but was soon subject to influence from Lombardy. It seems unlikely that Piedmontese players should have retained the tradition of treating the Angel as the highest trump and as having a high point-value had they not originally been used to treating it in this manner and to playing with a form of pack in which it did not bear a lower number than the World, probably because the trumps were not numbered at all, as they were not in Bologna until the late XVIII century. Unfortunately, we cannot verify this, because no Piedmontese playing cards of any kind have survived from before the XVIII century. Ducal edicts testify to massive importation of playing cards into Piedmont from France, and the Piedmontese went over early to using the French suit-signs instead of the Italian ones for the regular pack, probably copying imported French packs. The design of Tarot packs is always more resistant to change than that of regular packs, however. The earliest Tarot packs made in Piedmont that have survived date from about 1735; their pattern is copied from the Tarot de Marseille. We have an example by Jean Dodal, active in Lyons from 1701 to 1715, of a prototype of these Piedmontese packs, marked as made for export, presumably to Piedmont. The pattern underwent a considerable evolution in Piedmont, ultimately into the modern double-headed Tarocco piemontese, the only form of 78-card pack now manufactured in Italy. But the Piedmontese packs from the early XVIII century had not yet evolved significantly from their French originals; this suggests that the use of Tarot packs imported from France had only recently become general. Presumably, then, a native standard pattern for the Tarot pack had previously been in use in Piedmont, most likely with unnumbered trumps and perhaps used until the end of the XVII century; but, if so, we have no specimens of it. From one celebrated pack made in Paris in the mid-XVII century by Jacques Viéville, we know that there was in France a standard pattern for the Tarot pack quite different from the Tarot de Marseille; this was ancestral to the pattern used and manufactured in what is now

Belgium, an example of which was made in Rouen in about 1723, probably for export to the Austrian Netherlands. This pattern has some Bolognese characteristics, though greatly changed; it can have entered France only from Italy. Did it do so through Savoy? Is it a descendant of the missing original Piedmontese pattern? These are tempting speculations; but as yet they remain only speculations.

From 1739 onwards we have travellers' reports of Tarot being played in Piedmont.<sup>2</sup> A great many different Tarot games were played in Piedmont; there was no such great variety in Lombardy. The earliest actual account of Piedmontese Tarot games is given in *Primi Elementi e Regole del Giuoco de' Tarocchi* (PE), Turin, 1787. Some hints may be obtained from *Regole inalterabili per tutti i giuochi di Tarocco detti di commercio* (RI), by Carlo O..., Turin, 1830; but this takes the rules of the games as known, and merely lists penalties for a misdeal, revoke, etc.

#### *General rules and terminology for Piedmontese Tarot games*

In PE the generic word for trumps is *trionfi*, but in RI they are called *tarocchi*. The XX, I and Fool are called *l'Angelo*, *il Bagatto* and *il Folle*; the XXI is called *il Mondo*; these three cards and the four Kings are called collectively 'honours' (*onori*). A Queen is called a *Donna*. The XX is the highest trump, followed by the XXI, then the XIX and so on. Save in Trentuno and Sedici, the cards have their standard values, save that the XX is worth 5 points and the XXI is an empty card; the Fool has its standard value of 5 points. Except in Trentuno and Sedici, the Fool serves as Excuse, with exchange; the exchange is made at the end of the hand. If the player or side which had the Fool makes no tricks, it must be

<sup>2</sup> A letter of Thomas Gray's from Turin, dated 16 November 1739, testifies to its being played in that city; see *The Letters of Thomas Gray chronologically arranged from the Walpole and Mason Collections*, Vol. I, London, 1827, p. 54. There is a reference in De La Lande, *Voyage d'un François en Italie fait dans les années 1765 & 1766*, Vol. I, Venice and Paris, 1769, p. 217, to 'les Tarocchi, espece de cartes particulieres' as being made in Turin. Joseph Baretti, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy*, Vol. II, London, 1768, speaks of the game of Tarocco as in vogue in Piedmont and Lombardy.

surrendered to the player or side that won the trick to which it was played. If the dealer has to make a discard, he may never discard an honour. RI allows no exceptions to this rule; PE allows two. (1) A player holding the Bagatto but neither the Fool nor any other trump may discard the Bagatto. (2) A player holding the Fool may discard it if he believes that without it he may make a *vola*, i.e. win all the tricks. (It is not explained what happens if a player discards the Fool but loses a trick; a suitable rule would be that at the end of the hand he must surrender the Fool in exchange for another card to the player or side that first won a trick from him.) If the dealer or the dealer's side make no tricks, the discard must be surrendered to the winner of the last trick. When the dealer has discarded, he says "*Ho scartato*" ("I have discarded") and play begins. In certain games, the dealer has some freedom to choose how many cards to give out in each round of the deal; but he must state his choice before dealing. In all games in which the whole pack is dealt out, there is a pause after the first round of the deal to decide whether or not to continue it. If all players, after looking at the cards so far dealt to them, agree to abandon the deal in favour of a new deal by the next dealer, this will be done; it is called *andare a monte* (going to the mountain); a proposal to abandon the deal is made by saying '*A monte*'. A *vola* (slam) usually wins an agreed bonus. A *marcio* is a win in which the opponents do not reach half the points needed for victory (or sometimes one third of them); a *marcio* is paid double. In Permesso games, and in four-handed games with fixed partnerships, other than Consiglio, many players used conventional signals to instruct or inform their partners. PE is severe on this practice, calling it ill-bred; but RI allows certain signals as established by ancient custom. These signals, made when leading to a trick, are: *battere* (striking the table with one's hand), asking the partner to take the trick and return the same suit; *pizzicare* (pinching the card), to show that the Bagatto is in danger of being lost; and *andar via* ('going away') or *mollare* ('letting go'), perhaps made by dropping the card from a height, asking the partner to switch to another suit.

### 8.1 Three-handed Venticinque (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

This game figures in the list given at the beginning of PE, but through some oversight is not described in the text that follows. It can be reconstructed from the rules given in RI as governing it and from the general rules given in PE. The dealer gives five cards to each player in the first round of the deal, and ten to each in the second and third rounds; the dealer takes the last three cards and discards three. RI allows the discard of three trumps, provided that they are all below the XVII, but forbids the discard of the Bagatto. After each round of the deal, the players may go *a monte* if all agree. Each player plays for himself; a rubber (*partita*) consists of three hands. The cards are counted in threes, so that there are 78 points altogether. At the end of each hand, each player records a score, positive or negative, equal to the difference between his point-total and 26, keeping a cumulative total from hand to hand. The winner is that player who, in the course of the last hand, first makes sure of attaining a positive cumulative score by the end of the rubber. If, when the third hand begins, he has a cumulative total of more than 26, he is already in this position, since he cannot lose more than 26 points in the third hand. If, in the course of the third hand, he has won tricks worth, say, 10 points, he will not be able to lose more than 16 points in that hand; so, if he started the hand with a total of 17 points or more, he has become sure of having a positive score at the end of play. The first player who, during the third hand, or before it has begun to be played, has reached this position, says '*Fuora*' ('Out') and becomes the winner of the game. The other two players play on, to determine payment. If, at the end of the hand, both the other two players have negative or zero scores, each pays the player who went out 5 game points; but if one of them has a positive score, he pays and receives nothing, and the third player pays the winner 10 game points. PE says that a player who has announced '*Fuora*' places his remaining cards face down on the table and takes no further part in the play, but concedes that some allow him to continue playing, throwing his counting cards on the tricks of whichever of the

other two he favours, but condemns this as an ungentlemanly act (*atto poco grazioso*). RI, however, requires him to continue to play, but *da fuori*. This means that he gives a card to the winner of each trick, but cannot himself win a trick, even if he gives a card that would beat the two played to it. RI lays down that he must give whatever card he is obliged to, and will be penalised by 5 game points to each of the other two for each infringement of this rule.<sup>3</sup> It may be inferred that he must give a card of the suit led if he has any, or a trump if he has not; but this will often still leave room for choice, and no indication is given in the text which card he must give in such a case, except that he should be 'impartial'. Possible rules would be that he must always give the highest-ranking or the lowest-ranking card he legally can (see game 8.42).

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### 8.2 Three-handed Partita (Piedmont, second half of XVIII century)

This game is not mentioned in RI. The deal and discard are as in Venticinque; each plays for himself, but all play on until the end of each hand. The cards are counted in *twos*, so that there are 91 points altogether, an odd empty card counting 1/2 point; at the end of each hand the player with the highest point-total, even by 1/2 point, is paid by both opponents. Apparently the payment is fixed, and does not vary with the point-total.

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### 8.3 Partita (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

The four players each draw a card from the pack; those with the two highest cards become partners, as do the other two. Partners sit facing each other across the table. The player who drew the highest card becomes the first dealer. The dealer

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<sup>3</sup> The passage from RI about the winner's playing *da fuori* after going out is as follows. 'Quando uno dei giuocatori sarà giunto a quel termine di vincita che non può più perdere la partita, cioè avrà nell'ultima distribuzione più di ventisei punti di guadagno, sarà obbligato a giuocare, come si dice, *da fuori*; cioè tutte le sue carte *firme* senza più tirarne alcun partito sulle inferiori, e quindi



gives nineteen cards to each player, takes the last two cards and discards two. RI allows him to discard two trumps below the XVII, not including the Bagatto. The cards are counted in fours, with two empty cards left over counting 1 point; there are thus 72 points altogether. PE states that some prefer to count the cards in twos, giving a total of 91 points. The winning side receives an *onoranza* of 10 game points; presumably this is doubled for a *marcio* (when the losers have 18 points or fewer), and trebled for a *vola* or slam. No mention is made of any further payment.

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#### 8.4 Two-handed Venticinque (Piedmont, second half of XVIII century)

This game is mentioned only in PE. The dealer gives twenty-five cards to his opponent and takes twenty-eight for himself (an extra three on the last round of the deal); the method of distribution is not stated. The dealer discards three cards under the usual restrictions, saying '*Io ho scartato*' when he has done so; the opponent then leads to the first trick. At the end of the hand, the cards are counted in twos; the player with the higher point-total has won, and his opponent pays him 1 game point. Players agree in advance what bonus there should be for a *marcio* (gaining more than twice as many points as the loser) and for a *vola* (winning all the tricks); there may also be bonuses for a *triplice* or a *quadriple* (respectively having more than three or four times as many points as the loser). (One might score 1 game point for a simple win, 2 for a *marcio*, 3 for a *triplice*, 4 for a *quadriple* and 6 for a *vola*.)

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#### 8.5 Morto (Piedmont, second half of XVIII century)

This is another two-handed game, again mentioned only in PE. It is exactly like game 8.4, save that the twenty-five undealt cards are placed face down to form a

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dovendo perderle le darà a quello dei giuocatori che imparzialmente occorrerà. Contravvendo a tale obbligo pagherà l'onoranza di cinque punti per volta a caduno dei due avversari'.

stock. After each trick, the winner of that trick takes the top card of the stock, shows it to his opponent and places it on the pile of cards he has won in tricks. In this way by the end of the hand all 78 cards will be shared between the players, who will have 91 points between them; an odd empty card is worth  $\frac{1}{2}$  point.

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#### 8.6 Baronetti (Piedmont, second half of XVIII century)

This is yet another game mentioned only in PE. It is a two-handed game for children, excellent for teaching them Tarocchi. The dealer gives ten cards to his opponent, placing them in a pile and turning the last one face up on top. He then gives himself a pile of ten cards in the same way, likewise turning the last one face up. Then he gives in turn two more such piles of ten cards, with the last of each face up on top, and lastly a pile of nine cards to each, with the last face up. The dealer's opponent starts the play, both players using only the cards face up on top of their four piles; when a card has been played from a pile, the next card in the pile is turned face up unless the pile is exhausted. The usual rules apply: one must follow suit if possible, and, if it is not possible, one must play a trump if possible. At the end of the hand, the cards are counted in twos, and the player with the higher point-total is the winner.

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The next game, Mitigati (also spelled Mittigati), is the Piedmontese version of the classic game described in Chapter 3. It is distinguished by the players' scoring bonuses for special combinations of cards held in their hands and declared before the start of play.

#### 8.7 Mitigati (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

There are three players. The dealer gives five cards to each in the first round, followed by two rounds of ten each. He takes the last three cards for himself, and discards three; he may not discard honours, nor, according to RI, trumps. He then says, '*Ho scartato*', and the declarations are made in order before the lead is

made to the first trick. Each player must make any declaration he is entitled to, and is penalised if he fails to do so; he does not show the declared cards to his opponents or further specify what they are. A player making a declaration is immediately paid its value by each of the other two players. Declarations, with their values, are of three kinds.

**Mitigati:** the XXI, I and Fool; worth 10 game points in itself.

**Honours:** any three or more honours; worth 10 game points for three, plus 5 game points for each honour above three.

**Trumps:** ten or more trumps; worth as many game points as there are trumps.

It is allowable to declare both Mitigati and Honours; a player with the XXI, I and Fool, but no King, is thus paid 20 game points by each opponent. Presumably, for a declaration of Trumps, the Fool counts as a trump, although this is not specified. PE notes that some award 30 game points for Mitigati and that some award more or less than 10 game points for Honours.

After the declarations, play takes place as usual. At the end of the hand, the cards are counted in threes, so that there are 78 points in all. If only one player makes 26 points or more, he is paid 10 game points by each of the opponents; if two make 26 or more, the third player pays each of them 10 game points. A player who wins the last trick with the Bagatto is paid 30 game points by each opponent; if he loses the Bagatto in the last trick, he pays 30 game points to each. A player who loses the Bagatto in a trick before the last one pays 5 game points to each opponent; there is no bonus for bringing the Bagatto home before the last trick.

RI envisages a possibility, not allowed for in PE, of announcing an intention to win the last trick with the Bagatto (*Bagatto ultimo*). Presumably this must be done in the course of the declarations. One who has announced Bagatto ultimo is not allowed to play the Bagatto until he is forced to. If he succeeds, he is paid 30 game points by each opponent, the same amount as if it had not been announced; if he fails, then, even if he brought the Bagatto home, he pays each of

them 30 game points. The incentive to announce Bagatto ultimo is provided by a pot, called *ghinghetta*, won by a player who makes an announced Bagatto ultimo, and doubled by one who announces it and fails to make it; presumably all contribute to it whenever it is empty. A player who has announced Bagatto ultimo is not allowed to lead any of the top five trumps (unless, of course, he has no other cards save the Bagatto). RI also envisages another player's responding to an announcement of Bagatto ultimo by announcing an intention to capture the Bagatto. If he captures it, the player who announced ultimo pays him 60 game points, and nothing to the third player; if the ultimo succeeds, the ultimo player is paid 60 game points by the one who announced he would capture it, and nothing by the third player. What happens if the third player captures the Bagatto, or the ultimo player brings it home before the last trick, is not explained; a possible solution would be that, in the first case, the third player is paid 30 game points by both the other two, and that, in the second, the ultimo player pays 30 game points to each of the other two as usual.

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#### 8.8 Two-handed Mitigati with the Morto (Piedmont, first half of XIX century)

This game is mentioned only in PI. It is apparently exactly the same as game 8.5, save that the players may make the same declarations as in Mitigati, scoring for them in the same way, may score for winning the last trick with the Bagatto, and perhaps may announce an intention to do so. The dealer may discard neither honours nor trumps.

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#### 8.9 Two-handed Mitigati with a large discard (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

The description in PE is exceptionally vague, but the following reconstruction is probably correct. The dealer gives twenty-five cards to his opponent and twenty-six to himself; the opponent discards twelve cards, and the dealer discards thirteen. The dealer now gives twelve more cards to his opponent and himself,

and takes the last three cards, discarding three. Neither may discard honours; RI adds that trumps may not be discarded either, but this may sometimes be necessary. Declarations, as in Mitigati, may be made before play begins, and there are the same penalties for losing the Bagatto, and the same bonus for winning the last trick with it. It is unclear whether an intention to win the Bagatto in the last trick may be announced. At the end of the hand, the cards are counted in twos, making a total of 91 points; all discarded cards count for the player who discarded them. A player who makes 46 or more points wins. From indications in RI, it appears that the loser pays to the winner 10 game points, or 20 if the loser has fewer than 23 points, plus as many game points as the winner has points above 46. If the winner has made *vola* (taken all the tricks), the loser surrenders to him all his discarded cards and pays him 130 game points.

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#### 8.10 Dottore (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

This is a game with five players, each of whom plays for himself. The dealer gives fifteen cards to each player, taking the last three for himself and discarding three, which may not include honours. Play is as usual. According to PE, the cards are sometimes counted in threes, sometimes in twos, and sometimes singly; in the last case, the counting cards have their standard values and empty cards count 1 point each, so that there are 130 points altogether. There is no information about the method of scoring. RI mentions *accusazioni* (declarations), presumably as in Mitigati; but PE seems not to envisage them. So far as appears, there is no bonus for Bagatto ultimo.

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#### 8.11 Consiglio (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

There are four players, divided into two fixed partnerships; but, unusually, partners sit side by side, preferably on one side of a rectangular table, and may show each other their cards and freely consult with one another in a low voice.

The dealer gives nineteen cards to each player in four rounds, the first or the last of four cards and the others of five cards each. He takes the last two cards for himself, discarding two, which may not be honours nor, according to RI, trumps. According to PE, the cards are counted in twos, giving 91 points altogether. A rubber consists of four hands. There are no bonuses; each side records its points for each hand, whether it won or lost, and keeps a running total: that side wins which has made the most points by the end of the rubber. RI, which waxes lyrical about the merits of the game, describes it differently. According to it, the cards are counted in fours, two cards left over being counted as if they were four, so that there are 72 points altogether. Each hand is then scored for separately; the winning side receives as many game points as it has points above 36. Though there are no declarations, there is a bonus of 30 game points for winning the last trick with the Bagatto (and presumably a penalty of 30 game points for losing it in the last trick, and perhaps of 5 game points for losing it in any other trick). (A bonus of 30 game points seems excessive when payment for winning the hand is so low; a basic score of 10 game points for winning would even it up.) Clearly, PE and RI are concerned with very different forms of the game.

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The next game is played with the shortened 54-card pack. This does not appear to have been known to the author of PE, but figures in RI; we should therefore put its introduction into Piedmont at around 1800.

#### 8.12 Consiglio castrato (Piedmont, first half of XIX century)

This game, mentioned only in RI, is identical to game 8.11 save for being played with 54-card pack. Each player receives thirteen cards, the dealer giving himself the last two and discarding two. The cards are counted in fours, two cards left over being treated as if they were four, so that there are 66 points altogether. Each hand is scored for separately; the winning side receives as many game

points as it has points above 33. There is a bonus of 30 game points for winning the last trick with the Bagatto. (The same remark applies as under game 8.11.)

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The next set of games to be described, the *Permessi*, are the Piedmontese equivalents of the games known in Lombardy as *Tarocc'Ombre*. Their derivation from *Ombre* is attested by the use of the term '*ombra*' for the declarer who will play alone against the other two; the expression '*sans prendre*' for one of the bids is taken from French *Ombre* terminology. The *Permesso* games probably originated in about 1750; we know from a travel book published in 1768 that they were practised at that date.<sup>4</sup> The bidding procedure, like the bids themselves, was borrowed from *Ombre*. It, rather than the method of simple escalation used in *Bridge*, is very frequent in *Tarot* games with bidding.

### 8.13 Three-handed Permesso (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

The dealer gives twenty-five cards to each player, in any manner he chooses; but he must announce before dealing how he is going to do it, and is penalised for failing to do so. He takes the last three cards and discards three; they may not include honours nor, according to RI, trumps. After he has said '*Ho scartato*', the bidding begins.

There are four positive bids: in ascending order, *permesso* ('May I?'), *a due*, *ad una* and *sans prendre*. No player is obliged to make a positive bid; to pass before any positive bid has been made, one says '*Io passo*', and after a positive bid has been made '*Andate*'. Once having passed, one may not re-enter the bidding. One may bid only at the lowest legal level. When two players have made positive bids without passing, they continue to make bids until one of them passes, before a later player may speak. For the player later in the bidding order, the only legal bid is that at one higher level than the bid made by the earlier

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 6, footnote 1. Baretto wrote of one game for four 'which is played by one against three, much after the ruling principle of ombre'.

player; for the earlier player, it is one at the *same* level as that made by the later player. Thus if the first player to bid says '*Permesso*', the next player must either say '*A due*' or pass; if he says '*A due*', the first player now speaks again before the third player can speak, and must either pass or say '*A due anch'io*'. The second player must now say '*Ad una*' if he wants to stay in the bidding. Only when one of these two has passed may the third player speak; he now engages in the same way in a competition with the survivor of the bout between the first two.<sup>5</sup>

There are four possible levels of play, in ascending order: *a tre*, *a due*, *ad una* and *sans prendre*. The declarer must choose a level at least as high as that to which his last bid corresponded (*permesso* of course corresponding to *a tre*), but may choose a higher one. At *a tre*, *a due* and *ad una*, the declarer respectively selects three cards, two cards or only one from his hand and places them or it face down on the table; he then calls for the same number of particular cards that he does not have in his hand (and has not discarded), which the holders of those cards must give him, taking in exchange as many cards from among those the declarer has placed face down as they have surrendered. It is not said what

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<sup>5</sup> This type of bidding procedure, which we shall encounter many examples in part III, is known in this book as 'bidding with immediate hold'. It and various other bidding procedures are explained in detail in Appendix B. The following two conceivable, if unlikely, bidding sequences may help to make the process clear:

|                         |           |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| A: Permesso             | B: A due  |                 |
| A: A due anch'io        | B: Ad una |                 |
| A: Andate               |           | C: Sans prendre |
| B: Sans prendre anch'io |           |                 |

B now becomes declarer with a *sans prendre* bid. The other sequence goes:

|                   |           |                 |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| A: Permesso       | B: A due  |                 |
| A: A due anch'io  | B: Andate | C: Ad una       |
| A: Ad una anch'io |           | C: Sans prendre |
| A: Andate         |           |                 |

This time C becomes declarer with a *sans prendre* bid.



happens if the declarer calls for a card the dealer has discarded, but if he calls only for honours the problem will not arise. Since PE mentions the possibility of calling for a Queen or even Cavallo in four-handed *Permesso*, it could arise in that case: presumably the dealer would have to give it from his discard, substituting for it one of cards declarer has placed face down; another possibility is that the declarer would not be given the card in this case, and would have to take back one of the cards offered in exchange. A player wishing to play *sans prendre* announces the fact if he did not bid *sans prendre*; he of course calls for no cards.

The lead to the first trick is made as usual by the player to the dealer's right, whoever is declarer, and play is under the usual rules. The two opponents of the declarer behave in every respect as partners during the play of the hand, keeping together the cards they win in tricks; the Fool must be surrendered only if neither opponent wins a trick. At the end of the hand, the cards are counted in twos, making 91 points in all; an odd empty card counts half a point. It appears from PE that if the declarer makes 45 points and a half, there is a draw and declarer neither pays nor receives a payment. If the declarer makes 46 points or more, he has won; if he makes 45 or fewer, he has lost. He is paid by or pays to each opponent an *onoranza* according as he has won or lost. According to RE, the *onoranza* is 2 game points if declarer was playing *a tre*, 3 game points if *a due*, 4 *ad una*, and 5 *sans prendre*. In addition, the declarer's card points are rounded up or down to the nearest multiple of 5: 52 and a half is rounded down to 50, 53 is rounded up to 55, and similarly. The declarer is then paid by each opponent 1 game point for every 5 points he has above 45, or pays to each opponent 1 game point for every 5 points he has below 45. RI states instead that there is no *onoranza* when the game was *a tre*, and that the *onoranza* is of 1 game point when the hand was played *a due* and 2 when played *ad una*; the book does not seem to envisage playing *sans prendre*. It can hardly be, however, that a

player making 47 points *a tre* is awarded nothing at all: so perhaps he should be given 1 game point for every 5 points *or part of 5 points* he has above 45.

To estimate whether, and how high, to bid, a player must reckon the points he will make on his hand, augmented by the cards he calls for. A void in a suit may be worth up to 9 points. Length in trumps is not so important in the three-handed game; what matter most are the court cards, suitably guarded.

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#### 8.14 Four-handed Permesso (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

The dealer gives nineteen cards to each player and takes the last two for himself, discarding two. The cards are counted in twos, as in the three-handed game, but each side will have an even number of cards, so that no draw is possible. All else is as in game 8.13. In this game, length in trumps is a much more important consideration in deciding whether to bid.

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#### 8.15 Quintilio (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

This is Permesso for five players. The dealer gives fifteen cards to each player, taking the last three cards for himself and discarding three. All else is as in game 8.13.

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#### 8.16 Sestilio (Piedmont, second half of XVIII century)

This is six-handed Permesso. It is not mentioned in RI, and is said in PE to be uncommon. The dealer gives thirteen cards to each player, taking no extra ones for himself. The bidding is as in game 8.13, but it is unlikely that anyone will bid higher than '*Permesso*' or play at a level higher than *a tre*. One who plays *a tre* and wins is paid 2 game points by each of the other five, plus 1 game point for every 5 points he makes above 45, as at three-handed Permesso. Presumably he pays similarly if he loses. If all pass in the bidding, the hands are not thrown in;

instead, a *giuoco sciolto* is played. In this, each plays for himself, and the one making the greatest number of points is paid 1 game point by each of the others. A card is given in exchange for the Fool as soon as possible, for fear of forgetting who won the trick to which it was played.

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### 8.17 Settilio (Piedmont, second half of XVIII century)

This is seven-handed Permesso, also unmentioned by RI and called a bizarre game in RE. Each player receives eleven cards; the dealer takes the last card and discards one. All else is as in game 8.16.

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### 8.18 Permesso castrato (Piedmont, first half of XIX century)

This game is mentioned only in RI. It differs from ordinary Permesso only by being played with the 54-card pack. It seems that it may be played with either three or four players; Jacopo Gelli, in the *Enciclopedia italiana*, lists a five-handed version, but this seems unlikely; if it existed, the dealer would take the last four cards and discard four, having given ten cards to each player, and this would give him a great advantage. When there are three players, each receives seventeen cards; the dealer takes the last three and discards three. When there are four, each receives thirteen cards; the dealer takes the last two and discards two. If we assume that the cards are counted in twos, there will be 79 points altogether, and 40 will be needed to win.

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### 8.19 Permesso with Bagatto ultimo (Piedmont, first half of XIX century)

This form of Permesso is mentioned only in RI. Apart from the additional feature of the Bagatto ultimo, it is exactly like ordinary Permesso. Since RI treats of ordinary Permesso (*Permesso semplice*), whether three-, four- or five-handed, under a single head, the Bagatto ultimo feature can presumably be added to any of

these. It is possible to announce an intention to win the last trick with the Bagatto; unfortunately, it is not possible to deduce more than this from the penalties listed in RI. Thus we cannot say whether there was a bonus for winning the last trick with the Bagatto unannounced, whether any player, or only the declarer, could announce Bagatto ultimo or what was the bonus for making, or the penalty for losing, an announced Bagatto ultimo. (A pure conjecture would be as follows. Any player may announce Bagatto ultimo. If the declarer wins the last trick with the Bagatto, unannounced, he is paid a bonus of 6 game points by each opponent; if he loses the Bagatto in the last trick, he pays 6 game points to each opponent, and if he loses it in any other trick, he pays 1 game point to each opponent, irrespective of whether he won or lost the hand. If one of the opponents wins the last trick with the Bagatto, unannounced, *each* opponent is paid 6 game points by the declarer; if one of them loses the Bagatto to the declarer in a trick before the last, each of them pays him 1 game point. If an opponent loses the Bagatto in the last trick, whether to the declarer or his partner, each opponent pays the declarer 6 game points. The bonus or penalty for an announced Bagatto ultimo is 12 game points; in each case, all opponents pay or are paid, regardless of whether the declarer or an opponent made the announcement. To repeat, all this is mere conjecture.)

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#### 8.20 Chiamare il Re (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

This is a special form of four-handed Permesso, of which PE and RI give markedly different versions. The dealer gives nineteen cards to each player, takes the last two for himself and discards two. According to PE, he may then either call (name) a particular King that he does not hold or lay face down on the table an empty card from his hand. If he calls a King, the player who holds it becomes his partner for that hand but does not announce the fact. If the dealer has all four Kings, but only then, he may call a Queen; in the unlikely case that he also has all

four Queens, he may call a Cavallo (and if all four Cavalli as well, a Jack). When the dealer has called a King, there is no further bidding, and play begins; each player keeps the cards he wins in tricks beside him until the called King is played, when partners' cards may be united. At the end of the hand, the cards are counted in twos; the dealer and his partner have won if they have 46 points or more, and have lost if they have 45 points or fewer. If instead the dealer has placed a card face down on the table, he has thereby indicated a wish to play alone *ad una* against the other three. In this case each of the other three players in turn must either pass by saying '*Andate*' or claim a prior right to play alone *ad una* by saying '*Ad una vado io*'. If any player does this, each player after him in the bidding sequence, including the dealer, must either overbid him by saying '*Io vado a sans prendre*' or pass. If all pass, the dealer will ask for a card in exchange for the one he laid face down; otherwise he will return that card to his hand. All then proceeds as in an ordinary *Permesso* game, with one player against three.

The procedure in RI is quite different. In this, when the dealer has announced that he has discarded, there is an ordinary round of bidding, in which the lowest positive bid is '*A due*'. (Both sources agree that a bid of '*A tre*' is not allowed in this game, but while RI expressly allows a bid of '*A due*', PE expressly forbids it. PE expressly allows a bid of '*Sans prendre*', while RI does not seem to envisage such a bid in any *Permesso* game.) Only if all the other three players have passed does the dealer have the right to call a King for a partner. Both sources agree that only the dealer has the right to do this.

According to RI, declarer will be paid by or will pay to each opponent 1 game point if he played *a due*, and 2 game points if he played *ad una*, plus in either case 1 game point for every 5 points above or below 45. When the dealer calls a King, each opponent will pay or be paid by one of the two partners; we may conjecture that the basic score will then be 1 game point.

PE does not give the scoring system. If it is the same as given in that book for *Permesso* games in general, a declarer will be paid by or will pay to each opponent 4 game points if he played *ad una* or 5 if he played *sans prendre*, plus 1 game point for every 5 points above or below 45. It would seem reasonable to set the basic score, when the dealer has called a King, at 2 game points.

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### 8.21 Giuoco del meno (Piedmont, second half of XVIII century)

This is a reverse game, mentioned only in PE. It may be played by two players with twenty-five cards each, by three players with twenty-five cards each, by four players with nineteen cards each, by five with fifteen cards each, by six with thirteen cards each or by seven with eleven each. The dealer does not take any extra cards, so there is no discard. Each plays for himself; there are no declarations, score for *Bagatto ultimo* or bidding. At the end of each hand, the cards are counted in twos, and the player with the lowest point-total has won.

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The next three games are of quite a different kind from usual Tarot games. In both PE and RI they are the first games to be treated.

### 8.22 Sedici (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

There are four players, to whom the dealer gives four cards each in any manner he chooses (in one round of four each, in four rounds of one each, in two rounds of two each, or in a round of three each and a round of one each, in either order); but he must announce in advance how he is going to deal, and is penalised for failure to do so. The cards are counted singly, the counting cards having their standard values, save that the Fool is worth only 1 point. It is unclear from the texts whether the empty cards count 1 point each or count nothing; most probably the former (see game 8.27). The Fool does not serve as *Excuse*, but functions as the lowest trump, being beaten even by the *Bagatto*. Apart from this, play is as usual; each plays for himself, and keeps in mind how many points he has gained. As

soon as a player believes he has 16 points, he announces '*Fuora*' ('Out') and play stops. If he does have 16 points or more, he is paid 1 game point by each of the other players who has 8 points or more, and 2 game points by those who do not. If the player who said '*Fuora*' does *not* have 16 points, he pays 1 game point to each of the other players (or 2 if he did not even have 8 points). It is not stated whether, if no player goes out, the points gained by each player are carried over to the next hand or not; the probability is that they are, and that there is a new deal by the same dealer, the cards already played not being put back in the pack (see game 8.27).

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### 8.23 Trentuno (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

This is just like Sedici, save that each player receives eight cards, and a point-total of 31 is needed to go out. With four players, there are only enough cards in the pack for two complete deals if the played cards are not reused. It is unclear what happens if no one has gone out by the end of the second hand; it could be that either the game is a draw, or that the played cards are then put back into the pack for another deal.

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### 8.24 Trentuno al meno (Piedmont, c. 1750 to c. 1850)

This is a reverse game; deal, play and point-values are as in Trentuno. No one claims '*Fuora*'. The hand finishes after eight tricks, and the winner is the player with the lowest point-total. PE mentions a similar reverse form of Sedici.

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RI mentions one other game, called Sessantatre (Sixty-three), which does not figure in PE, but it is impossible to deduce anything about it, save that a very small number of cards was given out in each deal. Jacopo Gelli, who contributed most of the article on games to the *Enciclopedia italiana* (Vol. XVII, Milan, 1933, s.v. Giuoco) had evidently seen a later edition of RI but not PE or any other

actual description of the games. His section on Tarocchi in the encyclopaedia article consists almost wholly of the laws about misdeals, revokes and the like, while his entry on Tarocchi in his own book, *Piccola Enciclopedia di Giuochi e Passatempi* (4th edition, Milan, 1929, 6th edition, Milan, 1965) contains almost word for word the laws given in RI for three-handed Venticinque and for Partita, together with the same general 'codice piemontese' of laws for all Tarocchi games given in the *Enciclopedia italiana*, with the barest description of the composition of the pack and the rank and values of the cards, with the XX superior to the XXI, but with no explanation of the role of the Fool. Both the *Enciclopedia* article and the *Giuochi e Passatempi* give a list of Piedmontese Tarocchi games, without explaining how they are played. This list comprises all the games treated of in RI, together with two others, Undici e mezzo (Eleven and a half) and Quindici (Fifteen). These, together with the 'Piedmontese code', may have been taken from *Il Giuocatore di Tarocchi* (Turin, 1846), which we have not seen. Gelli's list seems to exercise a strong fascination: it reappears in *Giochi di Carte*, Vol. II, Milan, 1969, s.v. Tarocchi, again with no explanation of the games save for three-handed Venticinque and Partita, and a cursory mention of Mitigati.

The Duchy of Savoy was a bilingual state: it included Piedmont, which was Italian-speaking, while Savoy proper was French-speaking. A document of the late XVIII century from the city of Annecy, which was then in the Duchy of Savoy, though it is now in France, is entitled '*Règles du jeu de Tarocs, comme on le joue vulgairement à Annecy*'; it of course describes the manner of playing Tarot in Annecy at the time at which it was composed.<sup>6</sup> These games strongly resemble certain of those we know from the Piedmontese sources. They also give strong corroboration of the influence of Bolognese Tarocchi upon the game played in Piedmont/Savoy because of a feature not mentioned in those sources: in

<sup>6</sup> See *Tarot, jeu et magie*, catalogue ed. by Thierry Depaulis of the exhibition at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 1984, no. 118, pp. 122-4.



all of them the trumps from 2 to 5 rank as equals, and are called by a name clearly derived from the Bolognese term '*Papi*'.

### *General terminology and rules for Annecy Tarocs*

Trumps are called either *tarocs* or *atoux* (also spelled *athoux* or *attoux*); *atouts* is the ordinary term used in France for 'trumps'. They are numbered with Arabic numerals. The Angel (*l'ange*), numbered 20, is the highest trump and is worth 5 points; it beats the World (*le monde*), numbered 21, which is not a counting card. The Fool (*le fou*) is worth 4 points in games for three or four players. Other values are standard. The 1 is called *le Baga*. The 20, 1 and Fool are called collectively *honneurs* (honours). In games for three or four players, the Fool serves as Excuse, without exchange. The 2, 3, 4 and 5 are called *Papots*; they are equal in rank, and, if more than one is played to a trick, the last played beats the others. With the exceptions noted, play is under the usual rules. The suit cards conform to the original ranking. The Q is called *dame* and the C *cheval* (horse).

### **8.25** L'écorché (Annecy, late XVIII century)

This is a game for three players, and is a version of three-handed Venticinque (game 8.1). Players cut to determine the dealer for the first hand: the one cutting the highest card is dealer. The dealer gives twenty-five cards to each and takes the last three for himself, discarding three: he may discard neither honours nor trumps. At the end of the hand, the cards are counted in threes: the Fool is counted separately, and two cards left over count as if there were three of them. (This is the equivalent of giving a card in exchange for the Fool, and scoring 5 points for it.) Each player keeps as his score the difference, positive or negative, between his point-total and 26; he maintains a cumulative running total from hand to hand. A rubber (*partie*) consists of three hands. If, at the beginning of the third hand, or in the course of it, a player exceeds a cumulative positive total of 26 points, he is *pâta*, and can immediately claim to have won the rubber. (It is

not said what happens if his point-total is found not to be above 26; perhaps he pays a penalty to each opponent, and play continues.) This is the analogue of being *fuora* in Venticinque: the winner is the player who first establishes that he will have a positive cumulative score at the end of the rubber. When one player has announced *pâta*, play continues: the player who is *pâta* must now always play the highest card he legally can, and, whenever he gets the lead, lead out his highest remaining trump, and, when his trumps are exhausted, his highest suit cards. The scoring system is not made clear; perhaps, as in Venticinque, each of the opponents pays the winner if their final scores are both negative, and one of them pays him double if he has a negative score and the other's score is positive. .

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#### 8.26 Le jeu de Tarocs à quatre (Annecy, late XVIII century)

This is the Savoyard version of Partita (game 8.3). There are four players, who cut to determine partners: those who cut the two highest cards are partners, as are those who cut the two lowest. Presumably partners sit facing each other across the table. The player who cut the highest card may give the first deal either to the player on his right or to the one on his left. The dealer gives nineteen cards to each player, and takes the last two for himself, discarding two. Players must be silent during play. The cards are counted in fours at the end of each hand; the Fool is counted separately, and one, two or three cards left over count as if there were four of them. Each side scores the difference, positive or negative, between its point-total and 36, and keeps a cumulative running total from hand to hand. A rubber (*partie*) consists of four hands. The winning side is that which has a positive point-total at the end of the rubber. (Some details may be missing from this account, since the last eight lines of the document are illegible.)

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### 8.27 Le jeu à Fora (Annecy, late XVIII century)

This is a two-handed version of Trentuno (game 8.23). The Fool does not serve as Excuse, but is an ordinary trump, lower than the Baga; it is worth only 1 point. Players cut for deal to the first hand, the one cutting the lower card becoming dealer. He gives eight cards to his opponent and himself, four by four. His opponent opens the play, which is under the usual rules, save for the Fool. The cards are counted one by one; the Fool and each empty card count 1 point, the rest have their standard values. A player who, in the course of play, has attained 31 points announces '*Fora*' and wins the game. If, after a hand of eight tricks, neither player has obtained 31 points, each keeps the cards he has won and retains the points he has gained from them; there is then a new deal of eight cards each by the same dealer from the remainder of the pack, and again the winner is the first to attain 31 points and say '*Fora*'.

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In 1860 Cavour found himself compelled, in order to gain the support of Napoleon III, to cede the city of Nice and the whole province of Savoy to France. In 1902 there was published in Chambéry, which, with Turin, had once been one of the two principal cities of Savoy-Piedmont, a booklet entitled *Le Tarot français*; it accompanied a charming French-suited 78-card pack in which all the trumps carried images of flowers and are numbered with Arabic numerals. Despite its title, the games described in the booklet bore no resemblance to Tarot games played elsewhere in France; they are in the Piedmontese tradition, the principal ones being in effect *Permesso* games. The favourite form is for five players.

#### *General rules and terminology for Chambéry games*

Trumps are called *tarots*, trump 1 is called *le Baga*, and the Fool is called *le Fou*. The trumps, which are numbered with Arabic numerals, rank in the standard order, the 21 beating the 20; the 21, not the 20, is a counting card. The ranking of the cards in the plain suits is unusual: in every suit it is, in descending order: K,

Q, C, J, A, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2. A shortened 62-card pack is used in some games, formed by omitting the 2 to 5 from every suit; the suit cards then rank, in descending order: K, Q, C, J, A, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6. The Fool serves as Excuse, without exchange. The original method of counting points is used; the cards have their original standard values.

### 8.28 Five-handed Chambéry Tarot (Savoy, early XX century)

The dealer gives fifteen cards to each of the five players in three rounds of five each; he takes the last three cards and discards three. He may not discard Kings, trump 21 or the Fool. He may discard trumps other than the 21, including the Baga, but only on condition that he has no trumps remaining in his hand; if he discards the Baga, he must say '*Baga à l'écart*'. Bidding takes place before play begins. There are three possible positive bids, which are, in ascending order: '*Je marche seul à deux cartes*', '*Je marche seul à une carte*' and '*Je marche à point*'. No player is obliged to make a positive bid, but, if they choose to bid, each must make a bid higher than any yet made; no player has a prior right to play at the level bid by a player later in the bidding order. When the bidding is over, the declarer, if he bid '*à deux cartes*', asks for two cards, other than the Fool, which he does not have; the holders of those cards must give them to him, and he gives them cards, other than the Fool, in exchange. If he bid '*à une carte*', he likewise asks for one card, other than the Fool, which he does not have, and gives a card, other than the Fool, in exchange. If he bid '*à point*', he does not ask for a card. In all these cases, the declarer will play alone against the other four in temporary partnership. If all five players pass in the bidding, the dealer calls a specific King that he does not have, and the holder of that King becomes his partner; he at once announces the fact (contrary to the practice in almost all other Tarot games). If the dealer has all four Kings, he may call a Queen.

Play takes place according to the usual rules. At the end of the hand, the two sides (1 against 4, or 2 against 3) count their points according to the original

method; the dealer's discard counts as a trick, as of course does the trick of four cards to which the Fool was played, but not the Fool by itself. There are therefore 68 points altogether. If both sides have made 34 points, neither side pays the other. Otherwise, the payment for losing when the declarer called a King or bid '*à deux cartes*' is as many game points as the losing side has points below 34, or twice that if it has less than 17. When he bid '*à une carte*', the payment is doubled, and when he bid '*à point*', it is quadrupled. This payment is made by *each* loser, and shared between the winners when there is more than one of them.<sup>7</sup> (Nothing is said about how to avoid fractional scores. The simplest method would be for each loser to round up his payment to the next highest multiple of the number of winners.)

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There are also games for three or four players, including some without bidding and some with the 62-card pack.

### 8.29 Four-handed Chambéry Tarot (Savoy, early XX century)

All is as in game 8.28, with the following exceptions. The dealer gives nineteen cards to each player, in a round of four followed by three rounds of five each, and takes the last two for himself, discarding two. In the count of points at the end of the hand, the dealer's discard counts as a trick, so that there are 72 points altogether. To win, a side must have more than 36 points; payment is calculated by the number of points by which the losers fall short of 36, and is doubled if they have less than 18.

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<sup>7</sup> Thus if a player bid '*à une carte*' and wins by making 36 points, each opponent pays him 4 game points; but if he lost by making only 32 points, he pays only 4 game points, each opponent thus receiving 1 game point. If the dealer calls a King, and he and his partner make 38 points, the three opponents each pay 4 game points, the dealer and his partner receiving 6 apiece. But if they lose by making only 31 points, each of them pays 3 game points, and each opponent receives 2.

### 8.30 Tarot croisé (Savoy, early XX century)

There are four players, in two fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table. There is no bidding; otherwise all is as in game 8.29, payment being as in that game when bid '*à deux cartes*' was bid.

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### 8.31 Three-handed Chambéry Tarot (Savoy, early XX century)

Each of the three players plays for himself, and there is no bidding. The dealer gives twenty-five cards to each player in five rounds of five each, and takes the last three for himself, discarding three. At the end of the hand the points are reckoned, with the dealer's discard counting as a trick; there are thus 78 points altogether.<sup>8</sup> Each player with less than 26 points pays, in all, as many game points as his score falls short of 26, and each player with more than 26 points receives, in all, as many game points as his score exceeds 26. If any player makes less than 13 points, his payment is doubled; if both his opponents have made over 26 points, each receives twice as many game points as the amount by which his point-total exceeds 26.<sup>9</sup>

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### 8.32 Three-handed Tarot simplifié (Savoy, early XX century)

This is like game 8.31, with the following exceptions. The 62-card pack is used. The dealer gives twenty cards to each player, in four rounds of five each, and takes the last two for himself, discarding two. When the points are reckoned, the dealer's discard does *not* count as a trick, so that there are 72 points altogether.

<sup>8</sup> In *Le Tarot français*, the general account says that in the three-handed game with 78 cards, the discard counts 1 point and there are 78 points altogether. In the later section on the three-handed game with 78 cards, it is said that the discard does not count as a trick and that the base score for each player is 24 points. We have assumed that this is a mistaken transference from the three-handed game with 62 cards, to be described next.

<sup>9</sup> Thus if A makes 12 points, B 32 and C 34, A will pay 28 game points. B has 6 points more than 26 and C has 8 points more, so B takes 12 game points and C 16.

Payment is reckoned according to the difference of each player's point-total from 24; a player with less than 12 points pays double.

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### 8.33 Four-handed Tarot simplifié (Savoy, early XX century)

This is like game 8.29, with the following exceptions. The 62-card pack is used. The dealer gives fifteen cards to each player, in three rounds of five each, taking the last two for himself and discarding two. Bidding is as in the five-handed game (game 8.28), save that the dealer is not allowed to bid '*à deux cartes*'. When the points are reckoned, the dealer's discard of two cards *does* count as a trick, so that there are 68 points altogether, as in game 8.28. Payments are therefore calculated just as in that game.

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### 8.34 Tarot croisé simplifié (Savoy, early XX century)

All is as in game 8.33, with the following exceptions. The 62-card pack is used. The four players play in fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table. There is no bidding. Points are reckoned in the same way, the dealer's discard counting as a trick. There are thus 68 points in all, and the payments depend on the difference between each side's point-total and 34 points; a side with fewer than 17 points pays double.

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Piedmont remains one of the two regions of mainland Italy where the game of Tarot continues to flourish (the other being Bologna and its environs); but published information about the modern Piedmontese mode of play is hard to come by. The article on Tarocchi in the two-volume anonymous compilation *Giochi di Carte* (Edizioni Librex, Milan, 1969) describes the game according to the Piedmontese tradition. It recognises three forms: the simple three-handed Venticinque; four-handed Partita with two fixed partnerships; and three-handed Mitigati, which is cursorily described without mentioning the declarations or

winning the last trick with the Bagatto. From direct contact with players we have learned that the simple three-handed game is called Scarto in Pinerolo, to distinguish it from Mitigati, which is very popular there, but simply Tarocchi in Turin. In Turin the simple four-handed game, also called Tarocchi, is more often played than the three-handed one; it is not much played in Pinerolo. The name Partita seems to be no longer in use for it. These games are usually played for small stakes. There are slight differences in the mode of play in these two cities.

### 8.35 Scarto (Pinerolo and Turin, late XX century)

There are three players; each plays for himself. Trumps are called *tarocchi*, the 20 *l'Angelo*, the 21 *il Mondo* and the Fool *il Matto*; the 20 is worth 5 points and beats the 21, which is not a counting card. The Fool is worth 4 points; other values are standard. The dealer gives twenty-five cards to each of the other players and twenty-eight to himself, of which he discards three. In Turin the dealer gives each player in turn his whole hand at a time; in Pinerolo he deals them in five rounds of five each, taking the last three for himself. The dealer may not discard a King, the 20 or the Fool; he may discard the Bagatto only if it is his only trump. The Fool serves as Excuse, without exchange. It may be led to a trick, in which case the next player may play any card, which counts for the third player as if it had been led to the trick. At Pinerolo, a player retains the Fool even if he wins no tricks, and the dealer retains his discard even if he wins none; it is probable that in Turin in such a case the Fool is surrendered to the winner of the trick to which it was played, and the dealer's discard to the winner of the last trick. At the end of the hand, the cards are counted in threes; the Fool is counted separately, and the player with two cards left over counts them as if they were three. There are therefore 78 points altogether. Each player scores the difference, positive or negative, between his point-total and 26. A rubber consists of three hands; each keeps a cumulative score from hand to hand, and the player with the



lowest total score pays a small stake to each of the other two, usually buying them a drink.

*Possible variant.*

According to E. Fantini and C. B. Santelia, *I Giochi di Carte* (Milan, 1985), pp. 351-4, the Matto serves as Excuse, but *with* exchange from cards won in tricks. A player may not play the Matto until he has won a trick, with the result that one who has the Matto but wins no tricks must play it to the last trick, when he loses it. (It is clear that he loses it because he has won no tricks, not because he played it to the last trick; nothing is said about a player who has won the penultimate trick but no other.) A player who is entitled to play the Matto may lead it, in which case the other players must play a trump if they can (it is not said what happens if neither of them has one).<sup>10</sup>

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### 8.36 Four-handed Tarocchi (Pinerolo and Turin, late XX century)

There are two fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table. The values of the cards and rules of play are as in Scarto. The dealer gives nineteen

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<sup>10</sup> The article on Tarocchi in this book is highly unreliable. The authors are evidently not themselves familiar with the game. They refer to the game they describe as a variant of Piedmontese Tarocco called 'il Tre e Venticinque'. (The word 'Tarocco' in the singular is usually applied to a type of Tarot pack, the game being called 'Tarocchi' in the plural. The Tarocco piemontese is the only type of 78-card Tarot pack now made in Italy.) The authors state that the Angelo (20) beats the Mondo (21). But when they explain the assignment of points to the cards, they give the Mondo (21) as worth 5 points, and do not treat the Angelo (20) as a counting card. It is thus left unclear whether they are describing a game from Piedmont or from Lombardy. For them, the deal is clockwise, in fives, but play is anti-clockwise; the dealer may not discard Kings or trumps. Their account of card points is bizarre: they make no mention of counting the cards in threes, but leave a reader to understand them as counted singly; they assign 5 points to the Mondo (21) and the Bagatto (1), 4 to the Matto (Fool), 4 to each Donna (Queen), 3 to each Cavallo (Knight) and 2 points to each King and each Fante (Jack); all other cards are worth 1/3 point. They remark correctly that the total of points in the pack is 78; on their method, it would come to 1/3 point less than 78. A Tarot game in which the second highest trump, but not the highest, was a counting card, and in which Kings were worth only 2 points, would be unusual indeed. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that the rules they give concerning the Matto represent the actual variant practice of some players.

cards to each player in a single batch, and takes the last two for himself, discarding two under the same restrictions as in Scarto. In Turin, the cards are counted in fours, the Fool being counted separately, the three cards of the trick to which it was played being treated as if they were four, and the dealer's two discarded cards also being treated as if they were four; there are therefore 72 points altogether. It seems, however, that at Pinerolo the cards are counted in threes, making 78 points altogether.<sup>11</sup> In Turin, the Fool must be surrendered to the opponents if the side that had it makes no tricks, and the dealer's discard surrendered to the opponents if the dealer's side makes no tricks; but at Pinerolo the Fool and the discard are retained in these circumstances. At the end of each hand, each side scores the difference, positive or negative, between its point-total and 36 (39 in Pinerolo). A rubber consists of four hands; each side keeps a cumulative score from hand to hand, and the side with the lower total score pays a small stake to the other two players, usually buying them a drink.

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Mitigati is still played enthusiastically both in Turin and at Pinerolo, usually for high stakes.

### 8.37 Three-handed Mitigati (Pinerolo, late XX century)

The rank and point-values of the cards are as in Scarto. However, the cards are counted *singly*, counting 1 point for each empty card and 4 for the Fool; this makes 129 points altogether. The honours (*onori*) are the trump 20, the trump 1 (Bagatto), the Fool and the four Kings. The rules of play are as in Scarto; the Fool belongs to whoever played it, even if he makes no tricks; likewise the dealer's discard belongs to him, even if he makes no tricks. The three players each keep a running score, which may be positive or negative, from hand to hand;

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<sup>11</sup> If this is really so, it will make for an awkwardness when both sides have just one odd empty card left over when the cards have been counted in threes, and the Fool separately. In such a case, the side which won the trick to which the Fool was played should count 1 point for its odd empty card, and the opposing side should count nothing for its odd empty card.

these scores must add up to zero. The dealer gives twenty-five cards to each of the three players, in five rounds of five cards each, taking the last three cards for himself and discarding three, under the same restrictions as in Scarto. After the second, third and fourth rounds of the deal there is a bargaining session. Each player in turn may do one of four things: he may pass, indicating that he is not seeking to obtain any points or wishing to give any; he may say '*Chiedo ...*', naming a number, indicating that he is willing to abandon the deal if he receives that number of points; he may say '*Offero ...*', naming a number, indicating that he is willing to give that number of points to abandon the deal; or he may say '*Vedo*', meaning that he wishes the deal to continue. As soon as any player says '*Vedo*', the bargaining session terminates and the deal is resumed. If no one says that, the bargaining continues in rotation until the total amounts offered equal the total amounts asked for. When this happens, the hands are thrown in and the players' scores are adjusted accordingly; there is then a new deal by the next dealer. In any one bargaining session, no player may modify a proposal he has already made in a direction favourable to himself: he may increase an offer or reduce a demand, but not conversely; if he previously passed, he may make an offer, but cannot make a demand. Any player may say '*Vedo*' at any time. If agreement is not reached by the third bargaining session, the deal is completed, the dealer discards and play begins.

Each player, just before playing to the first trick, may make any of the following declarations:

|                           |               |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Ten or more Tarocchi      | 10 + 1 points |
| Reale (four Kings)        | 20 + 5 points |
| Mitigati (20, 1 and Fool) | 15 + 5 points |
| Onori                     | 10 + 5 points |

In a declaration of Tarocchi, the Fool may be counted as one of the ten or more: "+ 1" means that 10 points are awarded for ten trumps, 11 for eleven, and so on. The ten or more trumps declared must be shown to the other players. In the other three declarations, the cards are *not* shown. A declaration of Onori requires four

of the seven honours. Further honours can be added to any of the three last declarations; the notation "+ 5" indicates an additional 5 points for each honour beyond those needed for the declaration; for example four Kings with the trump 20 will be worth 25 points. The same cards may not be used in more than one of the last three declarations, but any cards used for them can also be used in a declaration of Tarocchi. A player making a declaration is paid its value by each of the opponents: he therefore adds twice its value to his running total, while each opponent subtracts its value from his.

At the end of the hand, each player adds to his running total the difference between his point-total and 43 if he has more than 43 points, and subtracts it if he has less.

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The game is played under slightly different rules in Turin; we are uncertain of the accuracy of the following account.

### 8.38 Three-handed Mitigati (Turin, late XX century)

All is as in game 8.37, with the following exceptions. If the player who held the Fool makes no trick, he surrenders it to the player who won the trick to which he played it, and, if the dealer makes no trick, he surrenders his discard to whoever won the last trick. It is uncertain whether the bargaining sessions take place. The allowable declarations are:

|          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| Tarocchi | 10 points |
| Mitigati | 20 points |
| Reale    | 10 points |
| Onori    | 10 points |

Only eight trumps are needed for a declaration of Tarocchi, and there is no additional score for having more. An honour cannot be added to any of the last three declarations. The score for Onori is uncertain. It is probable that a declaration of Reale cannot be combined with one of Onori, but that otherwise any card may be used in different declarations.

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There is also a form for four players; we are again uncertain of the accuracy of the following account.

### 8.39 Four-handed Mitigati (Pinerolo and Turin, late XX century)

Each of the four players plays for himself. All is in three-handed Mitigati, with the following exceptions. The dealer gives nineteen cards to each player and takes the last two for himself, discarding two. At Pinerolo, the allowable declarations are:

|          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| Tarocchi | 5 points  |
| Mitigati | 10 points |
| Reale    | 15 points |
| Onori    | 5 points  |

Only eight trumps are needed for a declaration of Tarocchi, and there is no additional score for having more. If a player declaring Tarocchi holds the Bagatto, he must show it together with his seven highest trumps; if he does not hold it, he must show his eight highest trumps. An honour cannot be added to any of the last three declarations; only three honours are needed for a declaration of Onori. The payments again indicate the payment due from each opponent.

In Turin, the allowable declarations are:

|          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| Tarocchi | 10 points |
| Mitigati | 20 points |
| Reale    | 10 points |
| Onori    | 10 points |

Only three honours are needed for a declaration of Onori, and only seven trumps for a declaration of Tarocchi.

At the end of each hand, the dealer scores the difference, positive or negative, between his point-total and 33, while each other player scores the difference, positive or negative, between his point-total and 32.

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There follow three games currently played in the neighbourhood of Asti. The players observed playing these games came from Moncucco Torinese, but throughout this district players use only the shortened 54-card pack, not the full pack of 78 cards. They also observe the rule which makes these games a further corroboration of the Bolognese influence on Piedmontese Tarot play, namely that trumps 2, 3, 4 and 5 are treated as of equal rank. We may suppose that the game of Tarot came to Piedmont from Bologna, when Bologna was still using the full 78-card pack instead of the shortened 62-card one that became characteristic of it. We may suppose, too, that the game was first played in Piedmont/Savoy, perhaps using a pack in which the trumps were unnumbered, as they remained in Bologna until the later XVIII century, with the Angelo ranking highest and with the 'Papi' – the four trumps immediately superior to the Bagatto, namely the Pope, Emperor, Popess and Empress – ranking equal. When, in the XVIII century, a pack with numerals on the trumps, copied from the Tarot de Marseille, came into use, all Piedmont remained faithful to the first of these two features, despite the numbering; but most players were influenced by the numbering of the four Papal and Imperial trumps, and only certain regions, such as Annecy and Asti, continued to observe the second of the two Bolognese features.

#### 8.40 Four-handed Partita (district of Asti, present day)

The 54-card pack is used. A trump is called, in Piedmontese dialect, *taroch*, as is any Tarot game in general. Trumps 20, 21, 19, 18, 17, 16, 15 and 1 are known by their names: Angelo, Mondo, Sole, Luna, Stelle, Torre, Diavolo and Bagatto; the Fool is called Matto. The Angelo ranks as the highest trump, and is a counting card, beating the Mondo, which is an empty card. The cards have their standard values. Trumps 2 to 5 rank as equal; the one of these played last to any trick beats any of them played previously to it. Suit cards have their original ranking. There are four players in fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table. A rubber consists of four hands; the dealer for the first hand of the next

rubber, if there is to be one, is the partner of the last dealer. The dealer gives thirteen cards to each player, and fifteen to himself, discarding two; he may not discard a King or the Angelo, Bagatto or Fool. He may discard trumps only if he has to, and must then place them face up. Play begins after the dealer has discarded. The Fool serves as Excuse, without exchange. At the end of each hand, the cards are counted in twos. The Fool is counted separately, for 5 points, and an odd empty card is worth 1 point. There are thus 80 points altogether. Each side reckons its points as the difference, positive or negative ('up' or 'down'), between its point-total and 40; a cumulative score is kept from hand to hand. At the end of the rubber, the side with a positive cumulative score wins a fixed stake; if both cumulative scores are 0, there is no payment.

In the course of the play, any player may pass information about his hand to his partner by means of a conventional set of signals. The information must be true, and the signals must be apparent to the opponents; anyone may ask for clarification of a signal, and must be answered. The signals in use vary from village to village; those used at Moncucco are as follows:

### **Action**

### **Meaning**

When leading to a trick:

(1) stroke table from left to right with the card before playing it to the centre of the table.

The player is leading from a long suit (6 or more trumps or 4 or more of a plain suit for the first trick in that suit, or more than an average number of those remaining for a later trick).

(2) describe a vertical arc with the card, rising into the air and falling to the centre of the table.

There is only one card of this suit still in play, apart from those in the player's hand.

When leading a trump or a plain suit for partner to trump:

(1) describe a horizontal arc with the card, moving out to the right and then in to the centre of the table.

Asks partner to play the smallest trump needed to beat the second player's card.

(2) stroke table with card, starting near centre of table and withdrawing it towards yourself.

Warns partner not to play a large trump.

(3) rap table with fingers.

Warns partner not to play his largest trump.

When playing a card:

(1) strike table with card just before playing it.

There is just one card of this suit (or trumps) in player's hand.

(2) jerk card downwards just before playing it.

Asks partner, when he next obtains the lead, to lead a different suit from the one that he led before.

When playing a trump:

(1) shake card demonstratively.

This is the player's last trump.

(2) shake card with trembling motion.

The player's Bagatto is in danger of being captured (*Bagatto freddo*).

Having played a trump or the last card of a plain suit, at any time before the lead to the next trick:

(1) knock table with closed fist.

The player holds the highest outstanding trump.

(2) knock table twice with closed fist.

The player holds the highest two outstanding trumps.

(3) rotate card about its long axis before playing it, or describe small circles in the air with finger.

The player has the Mondo.

(4) jerk card upwards before playing it, or make the same gesture with the hand.

The player has the Sole.

(5) press table with the tip of middle finger.

The player has the Luna.

(6) announce possession of Stelle, Torre or Diavolo.

The player has the card in question.

When playing a suit card:

(1) press the table, or press the card on to the table, with the tip of the thumb.

This is the player's last card in this suit.

(2) knock table with closed fist.

The player holds the highest outstanding card of this suit.



(3) rotate the card about its long axis before playing it, or describe small circles in the air with finger. The player holds the Queen of this suit.

When following suit to another player's lead:

stroke table with card from centre of table towards yourself. Warns partner not to lead this suit.

When partner is about to lead:

rap table with fingers, saying, if you wish, '*piccolo*' or '*grande*'. Tells partner to lead a trump, perhaps specified as small or large.

At any time:

slide finger from side to side on the table, as if writing. Asks partner to provide information.

#### 8.41 Chiamare il Re (district of Asti, present day)

There are four players; partners vary from hand to hand. Players settle between themselves at the end of each hand. The general rules are as in game 8.40, save that the Matto is worth only 4 points; there are therefore only 79 points altogether, the cards again being counted in twos. The deal and discard are as in game 8.40. After discarding the dealer asks who wants to play Solo by saying '*Chi va?*'. Each in turn must answer whether he will play Solo or not; the first who wishes to do so is then entitled to ask for any card not in his hand, and the player who holds it must give it to him in exchange for another card, given face down. He may choose not to ask for a card; if he does not, payments are doubled. The other three players then form a temporary partnership against the Solo player. The dealer may choose to play Solo if none of the others does. If no one wishes to play Solo, the dealer calls a particular King; if he has all four Kings, he calls for a Queen, and so on. The holder of the card he has called becomes his partner for the hand; he must announce the fact as he plays to the first trick. Play then begins; signals are as in game 8.40. At the end of the hand, a Solo player is paid 1 game point by each of his three opponents if he has from 40 to 59 points, and 2

game points if he has 60 or more. If the opponents have from 40 to 59 points, the Solo player pays each 1 game point, and 2 if they have 60 or more. All these payments are doubled if the Solo player did not ask for a card. If the dealer called for a card, the side having 40 points or more wins: each loser pays 1 game point to one of the winners if they have from 40 to 59 points, and 2 if they have 60 or more.

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#### 8.42 Three-handed Partita (district of Asti, present day)

Each of the three players plays for himself; there is no bidding. The dealer gives seventeen cards to each of the other two, all at once, and twenty to himself; he discards three, under the same restrictions as in game 8.40. The general rules of game 8.40 apply, and the cards have their standard values, save that the Fool is worth only 4 points; they are counted singly, and each empty card is worth 1 point. There are thus 105 points altogether. At the end of each hand, each player reckons as his score the difference, positive or negative, between his point-total and 35, and keeps a cumulative score from hand to hand. A rubber consists of three hands, and at the end of the rubber the player with the lowest cumulative score pays a fixed stake to each of the other two. If at the beginning, or in the course, of the third hand, a player's cumulative score reaches a positive total of 35, he cannot lose, and must declare himself 'out' (*Fuora*); in reckoning his score, he may count points for the Angelo or the Matto, if he has either or both in his hand, but not for the two cards he will win from the opponents when he plays the Angelo. After going out, he continues to play, but must, whenever he has the lead, lead his highest trump, or, if he has no trump, one of his highest suit cards. When playing to a trick led by another, he must play the highest card he can if he can beat all the cards so far played; if he cannot, he must play the lowest possible card. If he has the Fool, he must keep it to the last trick.

In three cases, a player with the lead is *obliged* to make a signal:

- (i) when leading from a plain suit of four or more cards, he must make the long suit signal (the first in the list under game 8.40);
- (ii) when leading a card other than the King in a suit in which he still holds the King, he must say that he has the King;
- (iii) when leading a suit which he is certain that the third player will trump, he must warn the second player by knocking on the table.

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We may finish with two games played in Nice, and described in the journal *Armanac Nissart*, 16th year, 1930, in an unsigned article by Fr. Cason, 'Les Jeux de Cartes à Nice' (pp. 277 et seq.) The article describes two Tarot games as being the most popular, though it says that others are also played. Terms used in play are given in Niçois dialect. It mentions a cardmaker in Nice, Antoine Beranger, who had been producing Tarot packs from before the date, 1860, when Vittorio Emmanuele II ceded Nice and Savoy to France; since his death in 1890, no Tarot cards have been made in Nice, the author says. The games described are clearly in the Piedmontese tradition, and must go back to well before the French annexation.

#### 8.43 Four-handed Mitigatti (Nice, 1840 or earlier until 1930s)

##### *Cards and terminology*

The cards as a whole and the games played with them are called *lù tarocche*, which term also applies specifically to the trumps. The cards formerly used were Italian-suited ones with Italian inscriptions on the trumps other than the XIII and on the court cards. The inscriptions on the trumps are given in the article and are standard save that trump I is labelled *il Bagatte*, the VII *la Carrozza* and the XIV *la Temperenza*. The Fool is called *lu Fuole*, and the XX, labelled *il Giudizio*, is called *l'Ange* (the Angel). As throughout Piedmont, the XX is the highest trump, beating the XXI, and is one of the three honours (*Onor*), the other two being the *Bagatte* and the *Fuole*. Trumps II to V are called *papote*, and are equal in rank,

the last played to a trick beating the others; of course, they all beat the I (*Bagatte*). It appears that by 1930 players were using French-suited cards, with the black suits corresponding to Swords and Batons and the red ones to Cups and Coins. The Italian suits were called *li denari* (Coins), *li cupa* (Cups), *li spada* (Swords) and *li baston* (Batons), and the court cards, from the King downwards, *rei*, *dama*, *cavau*, *fantin*. The rank-order in Cups and Coins is the original one, with the Ace immediately below the Jack (*Fantin*), followed by the 2 and so on down to the 10 as the lowest card. That in Swords and Batons is eccentric: the Ace ranks immediately below the Jack, followed by the 10 and then the 9 and so on down to the 2 as the lowest card. The Fool serves as Excuse, without exchange. The point-total of a player or side, in the four-handed as in the three-handed game, is reckoned by the original method: 1 point for each trick, 4 points for each King or Honour, 3 for each Queen, 2 for each Knight (*Cavau*) and 1 for each Jack (*Fantin*). This makes a total of 72 points in the four-handed game, since the two cards discarded by the dealer are counted as a trick. The term for a declaration is *accusassion*. A game point, represented by a counter, is called a *marca*.

### *Deal and play*

The players cut for deal, the one cutting the highest card becoming first dealer. Deal and play are counter-clockwise. The dealer first gives nine cards apiece to each player. The players look at their cards, and any one may suggest that they should *anar a monte* or *au mügiu* (go to the mountain, i.e. abandon the deal). If all agree, the hands are thrown in, and there is a new deal by the same dealer. If anyone wishes to continue, the dealer gives ten more cards to each player, taking the last two for himself without showing them. Starting with the player to the dealer's right, each says whether he wishes to go to the mountain or to play: if all say the former, the cards are thrown in as before. The dealer now discards two cards, which count to him at the end of play. He may not discard Kings or Honours; he may discard other trumps, but must inform the other players if he does so. The dealer then asks, "*Cü va solete?*" ("Who wants to go solo?"). If

anyone does, he will play alone against the other three in temporary partnership. He has the right, if he wishes, to ask for any card other than the Fool that is not in his hand; the player who has that card must surrender it, and is given a card, face down, from the declarer's hand. If the declarer chooses to forgo this right and to play with his hand as he finds it, he is said to go *sans prendre*. If by mistake he asks for a card he has in his hand, he has a choice between playing *sans prendre* and abandoning the hand and paying one game point to each of the other three, together with the bonus for any declaration they could have made (see below).

If the solo player has ten or more trumps, he declares *tarocche* and exposes ten for the other players to see; the Fool counts for this purpose as a trump. The declaration will earn him 1 game point from each of the other three, or 2 if the ten trumps include all three honours. He then leads to the first trick. Each of the other players, if he is able, may declare *tarocche* just before he plays his first card. Play is under the usual rules. If any player had all three trump honours in his hand at the start of play, he declares *mitigatti* as he plays the last of the three; this earns him 1 game point from each of the other players when the hand is completed. The same holds good for a player who had all four Kings in his hand at the start of play; he declares them as he plays the last of them, and obtains 1 game point from each of the others at end of play. Note that the bonuses for declarations of *tarocche*, *mitigatti* and four Kings are personal and not shared with partners, if any. At the end of the hand, the declarer receives 1 game point from each of his three opponents if he has won the *partida* by having a point-total of 37 points or more, or 2 if he has 54 or more; he pays each 1 game point if he has from 19 to 36 points, or 2 if he has 18 or fewer.

A player who makes the *Bagatte ultimiu* (wins the last trick with it) gains 2 game points from each of the other three players; conversely, he pays 2 game points to each if he loses it in the last trick (makes *petar Bagatte*). Again, this bonus and penalty are personal, and not shared with partners. If the solo player

has gone *sans prendre*, the payments for winning or losing the game (*partida*) and *Bagatte ultimiu* are doubled.

If none of the players wishes to go solo, the dealer calls (*ciama*) a King not in his hand; if he has all four Kings, he calls the Angel (XX). The player holding the called card becomes his partner for that hand, but does not announce the fact. If by mistake he calls a card he has in his hand, he has the same choice as before between going *sans prendre* and abandoning the hand for a payment of 1 game point to each of the other three, together with payments for any declarations they could have made. Play is under the usual rules, and declarations may be made as before: *tarocche* before playing to the first trick, *mitigatti* and four Kings when playing the last of the cards in question. Bonuses for declarations are personal: all three other players pay the one making them. Bonuses and penalties for *Bagatte ultimiu* are likewise personal. A player intending to win the last trick with the *Bagatte* must continue, whenever he obtains the lead, to lead the same suit as he led when he first obtained the lead, as long as he can do so: if he fails to do this he forfeits the bonus for the *Bagatte ultimiu* if he makes it. At the end of the hand, the dealer's side wins if the partners have a combined total of 37 points or more; their opponents win if they have 36 points or more. Each member of the losing side pays one member of the winning side: payment is doubled if the losing side has 18 points or less.

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#### 8.44 Three-handed Mitigatti (Nice, 1840 or earlier until 1930s)

All is as in game 8.43 with the following exceptions. There are three players, and the cards are dealt in batches of 9, 6 and 10, the dealer giving himself 13 cards instead of 10 in the last round of the deal. It is not explicitly stated, but presumably there is a pause after each of the three rounds of the deal, when the players may agree to go to the mountain. There is no possibility to play solo or to call for a card, and there are no partnerships; each player plays for himself.

Because of the greater number of tricks in the three-player game, there are 78 points in total instead of 72. Any player who takes at least 13 but fewer than 26 points must pay 1 game point to the player with most points; a player with fewer than 13 points must pay 2 game points. It is not said what happens if two players tie for most points; presumably they divide the payment between them. Declarations and payments for *tarocche*, *mitigatti*, four Kings and *Bagatte ultimiu* are the same as in the four-player game.

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It is to be hoped that someone will discover a pre-XVIII century Tarot pack from the Duchy of Savoy, and so help to confirm the conjectures made in this chapter.

## CHAPTER 9

### Modern French Tarot

From its first introduction in the XVI century and for at least the first half of the XVII century, the game of Tarot was extremely popular throughout France, as is attested by a very great many literary references. But, while its popularity remained undiminished in the eastern part of the country – Alsace (French from 1648 to 1870 and from 1918 onwards), Franche-Comté (French from 1679 onwards), Burgundy and Provence – it had been by 1700 completely forgotten in all the rest of France.<sup>1</sup> Thierry Depaulis dates its decline in popularity outside the east of the country from the middle of the XVII century.<sup>2</sup> Since 1945, however, the game has been enjoying revived and steadily increasing popularity in all parts of the country. A popular explanation of this revival is that, during the war in Algeria, French soldiers received parcels containing, among much else, Tarot packs with rules of the game; whether this story has any basis we do not know. A

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in Chapter 3, editions of *La Maison académique* from 1659 to 1702 carried a description of Tarot; but when the series was resumed in 1718 under the title *Académie universelle des jeux*, Tarot had been dropped, and was not subsequently reinstated. A pamphlet published in 1725 by the master cardmakers of Paris (Bib. Nat., Imp., Fm 12384), directed against the master stationers, mentions ‘Tarot cards, which are a peculiar kind of playing cards whose use is unknown in Paris today’. An edition of 1726 of *Les facétieuses nuits*, a translation by Jean Louveau and Pierre de Larivey Champenois of a book of riddles by the Italian author Giovanni Francesco Straparola, glossed the answer ‘the game of Tarot’ to one of the riddles by explaining to the readers that it was ‘a kind of card game nowadays obsolete’. Much later, Antoine Court de Gébelin referred to Tarot, in Vol. VIII of his *Monde primitif* (Paris, 1781), p. 365, as ‘a game unknown, it is true, in Paris, but well known in Italy, in Germany and even in Provence’.

<sup>2</sup> He appeals to a remark in the *Mémoires* of the abbé Michel de Marolles, published in Paris in 1656, to the effect that Tarots are “a type of cards the use of which was formerly more common than it is at present”. See his ‘Quand l’abbé de Marolles jouait au tarot’, *Le Vieux Papier*, July 2002, pp. 313-26.



Fédération Française de Tarot was founded in 1973 with headquarters at Boulogne; it publishes official rules and organises local and national tournaments. The modern form of the game is descended from that played in Franche-Comté and Burgundy. France long resisted the German innovation of Tarot packs with French suit-signs, but finally succumbed completely to the new fashion, with Arabic numerals on the trumps, around 1900. The shortened 54-card pack has never been used in France. In 1930 the cardmaking firm of Grimaud, at the instigation of Paul Marteau, its head until 1963, issued for use in fortune-telling a pack conforming to the traditional Italian-suited standard pattern whose name, the Tarot de Marseille, is now universally used and was promoted by Marteau.

#### *General rules and terminology for modern French Tarot games*

The full 78-card pack is used. Play is preceded by bidding, so that there are always two sides. Trumps are called *atouts* – the ordinary French word for ‘trump’, in Bridge and other games. The Fool is called *l’Excuse* and serves as Excuse, with exchange; but if it is played to the last trick, it belongs to the side that wins that trick. However, in all forms of the game, if a player (with his partner, if any) has won all the preceding tricks, he may play the Excuse to the last trick, which it automatically wins (as if it were the highest trump); he or his side thus makes a *chelem* (slam). If the Excuse is played before the one playing it has won a trick, it is placed face up beside that player if the trick is won by the opposing side, and a card given in exchange for it as soon as he wins a trick; if he never wins one, the Excuse is surrendered to the opponents. If the Excuse is led to a trick, the second player is free to play any card he chooses; that card determines in what suit the trick is played, as if it had been led to the trick. A player may sometimes wish to surrender the lead to a partner by this means. The trump 1 was formerly called *le Paguet* and is now known as *le Petit*. The cards have their standard values, and are counted in twos, so that there are 91 points in all; an odd empty card is worth  $\frac{1}{2}$  point. The 21, Petit and Excuse (the standard trump honours) were formerly known by French players as *oudlers* (a word with

no other meaning) and nowadays as *bouts* (ends). They have an importance different from that in any other type of Tarot game, in that the required point-total for the declarer's side to win the hand depends on how many of the three trump honours (*oudlers* or *bouts*) it has in its tricks. If it has none, it must have made 56 points or more to win; if it has one, it must have made 51 points or more to win; if it has two, it needs only 41 points or more to win; and if it has all three, it requires only 36 points or more to win. When each side has an even number of cards in its tricks, as in a four-handed game, these will also be the totals required by the opponents to defeat the declarer's side; but the declarer (with his partner, if any) will have lost if they have a point-total even  $\frac{1}{2}$  point below that which they require. Since the 21 cannot be lost, and the Excuse hardly ever, bringing the Petit home, or capturing it from the opposing side, becomes of the highest importance. During the course of the deal, a stock is formed, which was formerly called the *talon* and is now called the *chien* (dog), a word also applied to a discard. In addition to the usual constraints on playing to a trick, it is obligatory, whenever one has to play a trump, to play one higher than any yet played to the trick if one can; if one cannot, one may play any trump if one has one. This rule applies whether a trump or a suit card was led. The rule facilitates the capture of the Petit – *la chasse au Petit* (the hunt for the Petit) – by the opponents of the player or side that has it. A player with a large number of trumps in his hand may declare them just before he plays to the first trick, but is not required to do so: this is called a *poignée*. Trumps must be shown to the other players up to the number declared. The Excuse may be counted as a trump for this purpose; but if the Excuse is shown, it constitutes a guarantee that the player has no other trumps than those he has shown; in other cases he is not required to say whether he has additional trumps. A *poignée* gains a bonus if the side of the player declaring it wins the hand; but if that side loses the hand, it normally incurs an equivalent penalty. The number of trumps needed for a *poignée*, and the amount of the bonus or penalty, will be specified for each different game. There is also a bonus

for winning the last trick with the Petit, or capturing it in the last trick; this used to be called *le Paguet à la fin* and is now known as *le Petit au bout*; if the Excuse is played to the last trick in a *chelem*, the bonus is awarded for winning the penultimate trick with the Petit.

### *Bêtes or mouches*

It was formerly the general custom to supplement the regular scores for winning or losing a hand by one or more pots; this is no longer usual, however. The simplest method is to have a single pot, to which each player contributes 5 game points whenever it is empty, and the dealer contributes 5 game points whenever it is not. If in any hand the declarer wins, he takes the contents of the pot, sharing them with his partner if he has one; if he loses, he doubles the pot. This method may lead to a very large pot if several rash bids are made successively, so that the game takes on much of the aspect of a gambling game. To avoid this, it was common to divide the single pot into distinct pots, formerly called *bêtes*, now known as *mouches*. At the beginning, or whenever no *bête* is on the table, the dealer contributes 20 game points, and each of the other players 10, to form the first *bête* or a new one. If in any hand the declarer loses, he doubles the *bête* if it has not yet been doubled, or forms a new *bête* by giving as much as the largest existing one. If he wins, he takes the largest *bête* on the table. Before each deal, the dealer adds 5 game points to the largest *bête* if there is one. Thus, suppose there are three players. The first *bête* consists of 40 game points. If in the first hand the declarer wins, he takes that and a new *bête* of 40 game points is formed. Say the next declarer loses: he doubles the *bête* to 80 game points, to which the dealer adds 5. Now if in the third hand the declarer loses, he will pay to form a new *bête* of 85 game points, to which the next dealer will add 5. If the next declarer wins, he will take the larger of the two *bêtes*, with 90 game points, leaving the smaller, with 85 game points, on the table. In this way, the *bêtes* grow only very slowly.

The earliest account known to us of the ancestors of the present-day game is an anonymous little booklet, *Règles du jeu de Tarots* (RJT), published in Besançon in 1862. The next work on the subject was published, again at Besançon, in 1880 as *Traité du jeu de Tarots* (TJT) by M.A., a member of the Cercle Granvelle of Besançon; also published at Besançon, a third edition, with only the most minor typographic changes, was issued in 1902. This was followed in 1927 by *Le jeu de Tarots: méthode théorique et pratique* (JT), by M.L.A. and the members of the Académie de Tarots of Dijon; it is subtitled *Règles générales adoptées par tous les cercles et cafés de la Bourgogne, de la Franche-Comté et de l'Est de la France*. The author was evidently familiar with TJT, since he repeats several turns of phrase from it. This booklet was published by Bornemann of Paris, and repeatedly reissued by them, at least up to 1967. TJT does not repeat, and is not based on, RJT, but both works describe the same two games, a four-handed and a three-handed one. RJT mentions a two-handed form, but says dismissively that it is played in too many different ways for it to be worthwhile to give its rules. The two later accounts do not differ greatly. Both RJT and TJT envisage the use of an Italian-suited pack, but do not make clear whether the Pope and Popess or Jupiter and Juno figure as trumps V and II; the Coins suit is called either *Deniers* or *Roses*. RJT and TJT were written, the suit cards still maintained their original ranking, the Ace following the Jack in Cups and Coins; but by the time of JT the French-suited pack was being used, and in all four suits the 10s immediately followed the Jacks. This is interesting, in that it shows that France did not depart from tradition in this respect until the early XX century, far later than the only other land to have done so, Sicily, which must have adopted the same rank-order in all four suits by the mid-XVIII century.

Both the three- and four-handed games described in the Besançon booklets subsequently underwent extensive evolution. It is best to start with the oldest recorded form of the four-handed game, stated by TJT to be the only way of playing Tarot with four players, and so presented by RJT; this form is given by

JT as the old method of doing so, and there called *tarot d'appel*. Our guess is that it was little played in just this form after the 1930s.

### 9.1 Tarot d'appel (1850 or earlier to c.1939)

#### *Deal*

There are four players. Both RJT and TJT use the word *atout* (the ordinary French word for 'trump') as applying to the Excuse. In RJT and TJT the trump 1 is called the *Paguet*. JT also mentions this name, but prefers to call it the *Petit*. In all three sources, the trump 21 and 1 and the Excuse are collectively called *oudlers*. The dealer gives 18 cards to each player in six rounds of three each. RJT says vaguely that the dealer may give 3, 4, 5 or 6 cards to each in a round; TJT allows him, as an alternative to giving out the cards in threes, to deal in four rounds only, in any of the following ways: 3-4-5-6; 6-5-4-3; 4-5-4-5; 5-4-5-4. The six remaining cards form the talon; having counted them, the dealer takes them into his hand without showing them to the others. He then discards six cards, which count to him at the end of the hand, and may not include Kings. According to RJT and TJT, he may discard the *Paguet* if he has no other trump (save the Excuse, which for this purpose does not count as a trump); in no other case may he discard an *oudler*. RJT allows him to discard trumps other than *oudlers*; TJT does not. According to JT, the *Petit* may never be discarded, although there is no general prohibition on discarding trumps. Having discarded, the dealer says "*Vous pouvez jouer*".

#### *Bids*

There are three positive bids, which are, in ascending order: *appel* (call); *achat* (purchase) or *solo*; and *solissimo* or *jouerie*. If all pass, the next dealer redeals. In an *appel* contract, once the bidding, which may take more than one round, is over, the declarer calls any card of his choosing that he does not have; the player who holds this card becomes his partner without announcing the fact. RJT does not allow him to call a trump or the Excuse; TJT and JT impose no restriction.

TJT and JT clearly state that if the called card is in the dealer's discard, the dealer becomes the declarer's partner, which will become apparent only when the hand is over. If the declarer inadvertently calls a card in his own hand or in his discard, he is forced to play *solissimo* according to RJT or *solo* according to TJT and JT. For RJT these appear to represent the rates at which in this case the game is scored, whereas, according to TJT and JT, the game is scored at the rate at which it was bid. Presumably, on the latter rule, the declarer will be able to make a purchase (*achat*) if he notices his mistake in time, but this is not stated. In an *achat* contract, the declarer plays alone against the other three. When the bidding is over and before play begins, however, he names a suit card that he does not have (not a trump or the Excuse); the holder of that card must surrender it to him in exchange for another card given face down, for a payment to the seller of 10 game points. TJT recommends instead a payment equal to one fifth of the largest *bête*, as observed in the Cercle Granvelle; JT remarks that in some places the price equals the largest *bête*, which seems exorbitant. If the card asked for is in the dealer's discard, the dealer gives it to him in exchange for a card to be substituted for it in the discard. If the declarer asks for a card he himself already has, he must play at the *solissimo* level; but again, according to TJT and JT, the game is scored only as a *solo*. In a *solissimo* contract, the declarer again plays alone against the other three, but without the benefit of being able to buy a card. Unusually, the bidding is opened by the dealer. Each player must pass or make a positive bid higher than any yet made (not necessarily the lowest such bid); but RJT and TJT allow a player earlier in the bidding order to bid at the *same* level as the previous highest bidder (to 'hold' a subsequent bid). This is done by saying "*Je garde*"; if either is content to surrender to the other, he says "*À vous*". One who has already bid may bid again; it is stated by JT, but not explicitly by RJT or TJT, that a player who has once passed may not re-enter the bidding, but the earlier manuals probably intend this. RJT and TJT allow a fourth, highest, bid of *chelème* or *chelem* (slam), won by taking all the tricks. The contract thus

undertaken may be played under any of the three conditions: with a partner, selected by means of a called card; solo, but with a card bought from the opponents; or solissimo without purchasing a card. According to TJT, whatever bid he made, a successful declarer may announce his intention of making *chelem* and then has the right to purchase a card from whichever other player has it. The rule that the Excuse wins the last trick if all earlier tricks have been won applies: see *Basic rules*. JT recognises a special bonus for making *chelem*, but does not allow it to be used as a bid in the four-handed game.

### *Declarations*

A player may declare ten trumps just before he plays to the first trick, showing any ten to the other players; the Excuse counts for this purpose as a trump, though RJT and TJT do not require that showing the Excuse implies that there are no other trumps (see *Basic rules*). TJT also allows a declaration of 13 trumps; RJT and JT do not. In the unlikely event that two players each have ten trumps, both may declare them. None of the three manuals uses the word *poignée*. If it is the declarer (player undertaking the contract) who declares 10 trumps, then, if he fulfils his contract, he is paid 10 game points (20 if he had 13 trumps when this declaration is recognised) at the end of the hand by each of the other players, including his partner if he had one; but if he loses, he pays each of them the same amount. If a player other than the declarer shows 10 or 13 trumps, he is paid immediately by each of the other three players.

### *Scoring*

In the usual way, the player to the dealer's right leads to the first trick. The *required total* of points for a player or side to win (fulfil the contract) depends on the number of *oudlers* (trump honours) in his or its tricks, as explained in the *Basic rules*. RJT employs the term '*bête*' only in the phrase *être à la bête* (equivalently *être à la remise*), applying to one who has failed to make his contract and so has to double the last *bête*; for the original stake it uses the word

*enjeu* or *mise*. For TJT to double the *mise* is *faire la remise*; TJT and JT use the word *bête* as explained under the *General rules*. For RJT and TJT, each dealer puts 20 game points as his *mise* or *passe*, for JT only 10; in the Cercle Granvelle it is as high as 100. None of the manuals gives a clear account of the procedure, but it is certain that an *enjeu* can only be doubled once before a new one is created. In an *appel*, the declarer and his partner divide the largest *bête* between them if they win. For TJT and JT, each is also paid by one of the opponents as many game points as they have points above the required total, so that, if they have exactly the required total, there is no such payment. For RJT, each is paid 1 game point more than this amount, so that the opponents pay 1 game point if they have exactly the required total. If they lose, the declarer alone doubles the *bête* or creates a new one (see section on *Bêtes* under *General rules*); each of them pays one opponent as many game points as they fell short of the required total. In these and the following cases, the payments are often rounded up or down to the nearest multiple of 5. When the declarer plays alone, he takes or doubles the largest *bête*, and is paid by or pays to each opponent the difference between his the required point-total and that which he achieved, plus 10 game points if he bid *solo* (*achat*) or 20 if he bid *solissimo*. RJT and TJT lay down as the preferred procedure that mentioned but strongly deprecated by JT called '*compter le Paguet (Petit) en dedans*'. According to this, if the declarer or his partner wins the last trick with the Paguet (Petit) or captures it in the last trick, the required total is reduced by 10 points; if the opponents do so, the required total is increased by 10 points. RJT and TJT recognise, and JT advocates the alternative practice: '*compter le Paguet (Petit) en dehors*'. According to this, payments for the game are made in the usual way, but 10 game points are added to, or subtracted from, the payment received, or made by, each member of a side that has won the last trick with the Petit or captured it in the last trick. According to RJT and JT the bonus for making a *chelème* is 200 game points, paid whether the *chelème* was bid or not; if two players make the *chelème* together, each is paid the bonus by



one of the two opponents; if it was bid and lost, each pays 200 game points to one opponent; for TJT the bonus for *chelem* is 250 game points. If a *chelem* is made by the declarer on his own, he is paid the bonus by each of the three others; if a *chelem* is bid and lost by the declarer on his own, he pays each of them. According to JT, the bonus for *chelem* is 200 game points (there is no *chelem* bid in JT). When there is payment for *chelem*, points on the cards and consequent payments are disregarded. TJT and JT say nothing either about winning the last or the penultimate trick with the Petit or about the *bêtes* in this case.

### *Variants*

RJT mentions that in the four-handed game, some schools allow a declaration of any number of trumps from 10 upwards, worth as many game points as there are trumps (11 game points for 11 trumps, and so on).

RJT also mentions that some players allow a declaration of *cartes blanches*, made just before playing to the first trick, by a player who has no *oudler* and no court card in his hand. This is worth 10 game points from each of the other players. RJT does not state whether the player must expose his whole hand to verify his claim.

Finally, RJT observes that, while it is usual for a successful declarer to take the largest *remise*, some take the earliest.

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There was considerable evolution in the three-handed game, especially in respect of the bidding. We may start with the version described in RJT and TJT.

## **9.2 Three-handed Tarot (Franche-Comté, 1850 or earlier to c.1900)**

### *Deal*

The full 78-card Italian-suited pack is used, the dealer giving 24 cards to each of the three players in eight rounds of three each, the last six cards are placed face down on the table to form the talon.

*Bidding*

The player to the right of the dealer opens the bidding (but in the Cercle Granvelle, the dealer does). There are four positive bids, which are, in ascending order: simple game or *prise*; *sans achat*; and *sans écart* and *chelem*. In each case the declarer plays alone against the other two. In a simple game, the declarer first turns the talon face up for all to see, takes it into his hand and discards six cards: he may not discard a King, a trump or the Excuse. He then asks for a suit card not in his hand or in the discard; he may not ask for a trump or the Excuse. The player holding the card surrenders it in exchange for another card given face down, for a payment of 10 game points or, under a different convention, for a fifth of the value of the largest *bête*; the payment is shared between the declarer's two opponents. In *sans écart* (called also *solissimo* in RJT), the declarer exposes the talon, takes it and discards as before, but does not ask for a card. In *sans écart*, he does not ask for a card and leaves the talon face down: its cards belong to him at the end of the hand, but no one sees it until then. RJT has *chelème* as the highest bid, the declarer leaving the talon aside as in a *sans écart*; but TJT has the more sensible rule that a declarer may announce *chelem*, after the bidding and after he has discarded, if he was the dealer; if he does so, he acquires the right to purchase a card, even if he had bid *sans achat* or *sans écart*. A player who has passed may not re-enter the bidding. To bid a simple game, a player says, '*Je prends*' ('I take'); if the first player to make a positive bid wishes to make one at a higher level, he says '*Je prends sans achat*' or '*Je prends sans écart*'. If one player has said '*Je prends*', and a subsequent player wishes to bid *sans achat*, he says '*Je pousse*' ('I push'). The previous bidder may then, if he wishes, claim a prior right to become declarer at the *sans achat* level; to do so, he says '*Je garde*' ('I hold'). If he does not wish to claim that right, he says '*À vous*' ('Yours'). In reply to '*Je garde*', the later player may surrender by saying '*À vous*'; or he may choose to make the highest bid by saying '*Sans écart*'; in this case, the earlier player again has the choice of saying either '*Je garde*' or '*À vous*'. If the *sans*

*écart* level has been reached, of course the bidding is over; if the third player has not yet spoken, his chance to do so comes only after one of the first two has surrendered to the other. There is thus only one round of bidding.

### *Play and scoring*

The player to the dealer's right leads to the first trick, as usual; the suit cards rank in their original order. There are no declarations of trump holdings. It is usual to reckon the *Paguet en dedans*; that is, if the declarer wins the last trick with the *Paguet*, or captures it in the last trick, his required total is reduced by 10 points, while it is increased by 10 points if an opponent wins the last trick with the *Paguet*, or captures it in the last trick from the declarer. If the declarer wins, he takes the largest *bête*; if he loses, he doubles it. Each opponent pays a successful declarer a number of game points equal to the difference between his actual point-total and that which he required, or 1 less than his required total according to RJT, plus 10 game points at *sans achat* and 20 at *sans écart*. If the declarer fails, he pays each opponent as many game points as he fell short of the required total, plus 10 at *sans achat* and 20 at *sans écart*. (An odd  $\frac{1}{2}$  point gained by the declarer, equivalent to one odd empty card, is ignored.) Whatever the bid, the declarer receives 500 game points from each opponent if he makes *chelem*, announced or unannounced, according to TJT, but only 200 according to RJT; if he announced *chelem*, but failed to make it, or if he wins no tricks at all, he pays each opponent the same amount, whatever the contract. Point-totals are ignored in any of these cases, but presumably one who makes *chelem* can take the largest *bête*, and one who announces it but fails to make it doubles the largest *bête*.

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The principal change in the game as described in JT lies in the manner of bidding. The practice whereby a player earlier in the bidding order is able to 'hold' a bid made by one later in the order is very common in games played within the former Habsburg Empire; but by 1927 the original meaning of '*Je garde*' had evidently been forgotten, and, with it, the practice itself. The author

of JT was evidently familiar with TJT, whose phraseology he often echoes; divergences may therefore be assumed to be deliberate. Although JT went on being published until 1967, it is likely that the game it describes did not outlast the Second World War.

### 9.3 Three-handed Tarot (Burgundy, 1927 or earlier to c.1945)

All is as in game 9.2, with the following exceptions. A French-suited pack is used, and in every suit the 10s immediately follow the Js. 24 cards are dealt to each player in three rounds of four at a time, the last six cards forming the talon. Each dealer contributes 10 game points to the *enjeu* (the mechanism of this system is not explained). The player to the dealer's right opens the bidding. *Chelem* figures as the fourth and highest bid. A bid to play at the *sans achat* level; is always expressed by saying '*Je pousse*'. In a *pousse (sans achat)*, the declarer pays 10 game points to the player who sells him the card he asks for; the payment is not divided between the two opponents. A previous bidder is no longer entitled to 'hold' (claim a prior right to become declarer at the level bid by a later player); instead, the bidding proceeds in strict rotation, each player who has not already passed being able either to make a higher bid than any yet made or to pass. Presumably a player who bids *chelem annoncé* neither seeks to purchase a card nor takes the talon, though this is not made clear. *Chelem* is worth 250 game points from each of the other two players, the ordinary score for game being ignored; presumably if a *chelem annoncé* fails, the declarer pays 250 game points to each of his two opponents. It is still possible to make an unannounced *chelem*. Some circles have suppressed the bid of '*Je prends*' and, with it, the practice of the *achat*. A declarer who has said '*Je prends*' or '*Je pousse*' may not discard Kings or *oudlers*, but may discard other trumps if he wishes. If he is on the dealer's right, he leads to the first trick as soon as he has discarded; otherwise, having discarded, he says '*Vous pouvez jouer*' ('You may play') to the player on the dealer's right. A player with fifteen or more trumps

may announce fifteen just before he plays to the first trick, and shows any fifteen to the other players; the Excuse counts for this purpose as a trump. If he is not the declarer, he is immediately paid 10 game points by each of the other two players; if he is the declarer, 10 game points are added to the payment made by each opponent if he has won, and to the payment he makes to each of them if he has lost. If the declarer wins the last trick with the Petit, or captures it in the last trick, he is paid 10 game points by each opponent at the end of the hand; if he loses it in the last trick, he pays each opponent 10 game points. These payments are independent of whether or not he fulfilled his contract. As in game 9.2, the declarer is paid by or pays to each opponent the difference between his required and his actual point-total, plus 10 game points at *pousse* and 20 at *sans écart*.

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Game 9.1 reappears, in a slightly altered form, in *Règles du jeu de Tarot* (RT) by Pierre Berloquin (Paris, 1973) as a traditional method still practised, though on the wane. The dates given below are conjectural.

#### 9.4 Later Tarot d'appel (c.1940-1975)

All as in game 9.1, with the following exceptions. As in TJT, the dealer may discard the Petit if he has no other trump (the Excuse not counting as a trump); in no other case may he discard a trump. Any player, including the dealer, who has the Petit but not the Excuse nor any other trump may annul the deal if he chooses. If, in an *appel* contract, the called card is in the dealer's discard, the declarer must play without a partner (he will not know at first that he is doing so), but still at the value of an *appel*. Likewise, if the card asked for by one who declared *achat* is in the dealer's discard, the declarer must play without buying a card, but still at the value of an *achat*. A bid of *appel* must mention the card to be called, and one of *achat* must mention the card to be asked for. There are distinct bids of *chelem avec appel*, the called card named as part of the bid, and *chelem solo*; as a variant, a bid of *chelem avec achat* may be allowed as ranking between these. A round of

declarations, beginning with the player to the dealer's right, takes place before play begins. The declarations allowed are: 13 trumps (for 20 game points), 18 trumps (for 30 game points), 'No trumps' (the Excuse *not* this time counting as a trump) and 'Misère' (no counting cards), both for 10 game points. A declarer who bids *solo* adds 10 game points to the largest *bête* before play begins, and 20 if he bid *solissimo*. At the end of the hand, the payment to or by each opponent is the difference from the required total, plus 10 game points in a *solo* and 20 in a *solissimo*.<sup>3</sup> There is an award of 250 game points for *chelem*, but only if it was bid. In RT Berloquin is neutral between counting the Petit *en dedans* and counting it *en dehors*. He mentions a variation on the former. If either side wins the last trick with the Petit, or captures it in the last trick, its required total becomes 31 points if it has both other *oudlers*, 36 if it has one other and 41 if it has no other; note that, since there will be no half-points in the point-totals, the required totals for winning are the same for both sides. The *bêtes* are left untouched when there is a *chelem* payment.

#### *Variant*

The dealer does not take the talon at the end of the deal: it remains face down on the table during the bidding. Bids of *appel* or *achat* do not specify the card to be called or asked for. At the end of the bidding, the declarer takes the talon into his hand, without showing it to the others; if he bid *appel*, he then calls a card, and if he bid *achat*, he then asks for one.

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JT also mentions what it describes as a very recent method of playing four-handed Tarot. This is simply an adaptation of the three-handed game for four players; the present-day four-handed game is similarly an adaptation of a

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<sup>3</sup> Berloquin's text seems to suggest that, in a *solo* or *solissimo*, the declarer is paid by or pays to each opponent only the difference from the required total; but this cannot be correct, since it would destroy all incentive for bidding *solissimo*. It is possible that the detail about adding 10 or 20 game points to the largest *bête* before play is an error on Berloquin's part; in any case, the scoring system of game 9.1 seems preferable.

later three-handed form. JT remarks, quite truly, that it leads to many hands being passed out – all four players passing.

### 9.5 Four-handed Tarot (Burgundy, 1925-c. 1950)

All is as in game 9.3, with the following exceptions. The dealer gives each of the four players 18 cards in six rounds of three each, placing the last six cards face down on the table to form the talon. A declaration of 10 trumps replaces that of 15. *Chelem* is worth 200 game points. In all cases the declarer plays alone against the other three.

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The first account of a third stage of the three-handed game, as it had evolved after the Second World War, was given in Victor Mornieux's *Méthode moderne du jeu de Tarots* (MMT), published at Oullins, just outside Lyons, in 1952; this probably indicates that the game was still popular in the Lyons area as well. Several French playing-card manufacturers then included with their Tarot packs leaflets giving rules of the game basically agreeing with Mornieux's account. Catel's leaflet (Cat.) was anonymous; Héron's (Hér.) was by R.A.C., stated to be a founder member of various Tarot clubs; that issued in 1962 by La Ducale, and later by Grimaud (Grim.), was by P.B.V., President of the Grand Cercle Français de Tarots. Further sources are Pierre Berloquin's RT of 1973 and his *Le livre des jeux* (Paris, 1970) (LJ). In this version of the game, the bids remain largely the same, the principal change lying in the declarations. Until the mid-1970s, it was usual in France to think of Tarot as primarily a game for either three or five players; it was only when the new Fédération Française de Tarot (F.F.T.) started to promote the four-handed game, and to hold tournaments in this form, that this came to be the standard form of game, and the popularity of the three-handed version – but not of the five-handed one – began to dwindle. There are numerous variations in the rules, which will be set out after each section. .

### 9.6 Three-handed French Tarot (c. 1950-1970)

#### *Deal*

The dealer gives 24 cards to each of the three players in eight rounds of three each. In the course of the deal, he puts six cards face down on the table to form the talon; in the middle or at the end of each round of the deal, he may put from one to three cards into the talon, but never more than three; he may not put any of the first three or the last three cards into the talon. If any player has the Petit but not the Excuse nor any other trump, the deal is annulled and there is a new deal by the next dealer.

#### *Variants*

- (1) The deal rotates, from hand to hand, in a *clockwise* direction (RT).
- (2) The deal is in six rounds of four cards each, one card being put into the talon at the end of each round (MMT).
- (3) A player with the Petit but no other trump or the Excuse does not annul the deal immediately. As soon as a positive bid is made, that player declares the Petit *imprenable*, meaning that when he plays it, he will take it back and give another card in exchange for it. The player who made the bid has then the option of either withdrawing it, in which case the deal is annulled, or sustaining his bid (invariable rule – MMT, optional rule – RT).

#### *Bidding*

There are three ordinary positive bids, which are, in ascending order: '*je prends*' (or '*je prise*' RAC), '*je pousse*' and '*je garde*' (or '*sans écart*' LJ or '*je garde sans écart*' RT). The only difference between the first two lies in the scoring; the declarer exposes the talon, takes it into his hand and discards six cards, none of them a King or a trump honour. If the declarer has said '*je garde*', the talon is left unseen until the end of the hand, when it belongs to the declarer. *Chelem* bids are discussed in a separate section. Each player must either pass or make a



positive bid higher than any yet made; having passed, he may not re-enter the bidding. If all pass, there is a new deal by the next dealer. The declarer must play at the level of his last bid.

### *Variants*

(1) The *prise* is not admitted: only the *pousse* and the *garde*. The latter may not be used as the opening bid, but only as overbidding a *pousse*. (MMT).

(2) If the declarer bid a *prise*, he may ask for any card of a plain suit not in his hand; the player who holds it surrenders it to him in exchange for a card from the declarer's hand and the payment of 10 game points (LJ and RT, which agree that the practice is falling into disuse).

(3) A bid of '*je garde avec écart*' (Grim.) or simply '*je garde*' (RT) is admitted by some players as intermediate between '*je pousse*' and '*je garde (sans écart)*'; it is distinguished from *prise* and *pousse* solely by the scoring.

(4) RT mentions with disapproval the practice of allowing the declarer to announce that he will play at a higher level than that which he bid, and also that of allowing the player on the dealer's right to make a positive bid after all have passed.

### *Chelem*

Two bids, *petit chelem* and *grand chelem*, rank higher than all others. *Petit chelem* is a contract to take all the tricks but two, and *grand chelem* to take all of them, in both cases after taking the talon and discarding. Only in *grand chelem* does the Excuse, played by the declarer, have its privilege of taking the last trick. There is no special bonus for an unannounced *chelem*.

### *Variants*

(1) Only LJ, RT and Grim. recognise the *chelem* bids; RT observes that some players do not do so, and that some recognise only the *grand chelem*.

(2) MMT does not allow *chelem* bids, but admits a special score for an unannounced *grand chelem*, by the declarer or his opponents. It also allows a *chelem annoncé* by the declarer before play begins by saying '*Je demande le grand chelem*' as soon as he has discarded. He then exposes his hand on the table; if the opponents do not concede, he leads to the first trick. The Excuse can always win the last trick if its holder has won the previous twenty-three.

### Declarations

A player may, if he chooses, make any of the following declarations just before he plays to the first trick:

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| <i>Poignée</i> (13 trumps)                                  | 10 game points |
| Double <i>poignée</i> (15 trumps)                           | 20 game points |
| Triple <i>poignée</i> (all 22 trumps, including the Excuse) | 30 game points |
| <i>Pas d'atouts</i> (no trumps, nor the Excuse, in hand)    | 10 game points |
| <i>Pas de points</i> (no counting cards in hand)            | 10 game points |

A player making a *poignée* declaration must show to the others trumps to the number he is declaring; if he has more, he may choose which. He may declare fewer trumps than he has, but may not make more than one *poignée* declaration; otherwise, any two declarations may be combined. For the purpose of a *poignée* declaration, the Excuse counts as a trump; but it may be shown only if there is no other trump in the hand. A declarer who makes a *poignée* declaration is paid its value by each opponent at the end of the hand if he makes his contract, but pays the same to each of them if he fails to make it. If an opponent of the declarer makes a *poignée* declaration, he is paid its value by each of the other two players immediately.

### Variants

- (1) RT requires a round of declarations before play begins.
- (2) According to RT and to MMT one who holds the Excuse but no actual trump may make a *pas d'atouts* declaration (called by MMT *sans atouts*).

(3) Hér. and Cat. award 40 game points for a triple *poignée*, which MMT does not recognise at all. Note that both opponents will be able to declare *pas d'atouts*, so 30 game points may be a net payment. MMT calls a double *poignée* a *poignée d'atouts* or *grande poignée*. MMT and RT call the *pas de points* declaration *misère*, and *misère dorée* when it is accompanied by a *poignée*.

### Play

The traditional rule is that the player to the dealer's right normally leads to the first trick, as stated by MMT, RT and Hér. Only MMT lays down that one who bids or announces *chelem* leads to the first trick, but this is probably the usual practice. (Otherwise the *chelem* might be defeated by one opponent's leading from a long suit which the other opponent trumps.) What were formerly called *bêtes* are now called *mouches*. The declarer takes the largest *mouche* if he wins, even in a *chelem*, and, if he loses, doubles it if it has not already been doubled, or creates a new *mouche* of the same amount if it has. The dealer adds 5 game points to the largest *mouche* before dealing. Independently of the score for making the contract or failing to make it, there is a personal bonus of 10 game points for winning the last trick with the Petit, and a penalty of 10 game points for losing it in the last trick to an opponent. The bonus is paid to the player who played the Petit *au bout* by each of the other players, including his partner if he was one of the declarer's opponents; the penalty is paid by one who lost the Petit in the last trick to each of the other two players, including his partner if he was an opponent and lost the Petit to the declarer. It is unclear what happens if one opponent plays the Petit to the last trick and the other opponent wins it; probably there is no payment for Petit *au bout* in this case.

### Variants

(1) According to Cat., the declarer always leads to the first trick; according to LJ (but not RT), the dealer does.

- (2) A new *mouche* is formed whenever the declarer loses, and the dealer adds 10 game points to the largest one before dealing (MMT).
- (3) MMT describes a clumsy alternative method by which the declarer always receives a fixed *mouche* of 80 game points; if he wins, and there is less than this on the table, the dealer contributes 40 game points and the other two 20 each. On other occasions, the dealer contributes 20 game points.
- (4) RT and MMT recognise the practice of counting the *Petit en dedans* as a variation. Under this, if the declarer wins the last trick with the *Petit*, or captures it in the last trick, the point-total required for him to fulfil his contract is reduced by 10 points; conversely, if he loses it in the last trick, or one of his opponents wins the last trick with it, his required point-total is increased by 10 points. This has the advantage of making the two opponents unqualified allies.

### Scoring

Apart from the *mouches*, payments are made between the players as follows. If the declarer has won, he is paid by each opponent as many game points as he has in excess of his required total, together with a basic payment of 10 game points for a *pousse*, 15 for *garde avec écart* and 20 for *garde sans écart*; there is no basic payment for a *prise*. If he lost, he pays to each opponent as many game points as he fell short of his required total, together with the basic payment. If he bid a *chelem*, card points are ignored: he receives from or pays to each opponent 100 game points for *petit chelem* and 250 for *grand chelem*. If the declarer makes no tricks at all, he pays the value of *grand chelem* to each opponent. When there is a payment for *chelem*, all other payments are ignored, save for the declarations and for the *Petit au bout* when it is counted *en dehors*. When the *Petit au bout* is counted *en dedans*, it, too, is ignored. When *chelem* bids are admitted, there is a payment for *chelem* only if it has been bid.

### *Variants*

(1) MMT does not recognise the *prise*; payment for a *pousse* is the same as above. If a *garde* was bid (for MMT this is always *sans écart*), all payments are doubled, so that the declarer receives or pays 20 game points plus twice the difference from his required total; payments for the *Petit au bout* and declarations are also doubled.

(2) RT (but not LJ) allows only 200 game points for *grand chelem*, though mentioning 250 and 500 as alternatives. If *chelem* bids are not admitted, a declarer who makes *chelem* (wins all the tricks) is paid 250 game points by each opponent (or 350 Hér.); but for MMT, which does not admit them, the payment for unannounced (*grand*) *chelem* is 200 game points if there are variable *mouches*, but 400 if the alternative system of fixed *mouches* is used; in either case, the payment for announced *chelem* is twice that for one unannounced.<sup>4</sup>

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As before, all the sources describe a four-handed game closely analogous to the three-handed one, although the author of Grim. states firmly that 'Tarot was invented to be played by three people'.

### 9.7 Four-handed French Tarot (c. 1950-1970)

All is as in game 9.6, with the variants there mentioned, save for the following. The dealer gives 18 cards to each player in six rounds of three each; the talon is constituted as before (and as before in MMT's variant). A simple *poignée* consists of 10 trumps, a double one of 13 and a triple one of 18, which is worth

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<sup>4</sup> According to RT, the payments between the players are always just the difference between the declarer's point-total and his required total; but, if the declarer's bid was higher than *prise*, then, before play begins, he adds 10, 15 or 20 game points to the largest *mouche* according as he bid *pousse*, *garde avec écart* or *garde sans écart*. The effect of this surprising rule is that there is no incentive to bid more than *prise*, except to outbid an opponent. Higher bids gain nothing extra (the declarer merely wins back the extra game points he was obliged to add to the *mouche*), but incur greater losses if unsuccessful. It is hard to believe that this rule has ever actually been observed in any circle of players.

30 game points. If *chelem* bids are admitted, a *grand chelem* is worth only 200 game points; likewise, when they are not admitted, the bonus for an (unannounced) *chelem* is only 200 game points. A *petit chelem* now requires the winning of all the tricks but one (Grim.).

### *Variants*

- (1) As before, Hér. and Cat. award 40 game points for a triple *poignée*.
- (2) The value of a *mouche* on MMT's alternative system of fixed *mouches* is now 100 game points. As before, according to MMT the payment for unannounced (*grand*) *chelem* is 200 game points if there are variable *mouches*, but 400 if the alternative system of fixed *mouches* is used; in either case, the payment for announced *chelem* is twice that for one unannounced.
- (3) A *petit chelem* requires the winning only of all the tricks but two, as in the three-handed game (LJ and RT).
- (4) As before, LJ and RT (and they alone) allow the declarer of a *prise* to ask for a suit card and buy it for 10 game points. LJ, but not RT, also allows the declarer of a *prise*, instead of buying a card, to call for a partner by saying '*J'appelle ...*' and naming any card, whose holder becomes his partner. At the end of the hand, each partner is paid by or pays one of the two opponents. This is the only version in which the declarer does not always play alone.

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RT mentions a four-handed form as being occasionally practised, and as having the advantage that deals are not frequently passed out, in which the declarer always has the right to call a card for a partner.

### 9.8 Four-handed Partnership Tarot (c. 1970-80)

All is as in game 9.7, save that the declarer, having made his discard, if any, in every case calls a suit card to obtain a partner, who, as usual, does not reveal his

identity. One who bid a *prise* does *not* have the right to purchase a card. It is legal for the player who opens the bidding to pass, but he will seldom have a motive for doing so. If, in a *garde sans écart*, the declarer calls a card in the talon, he perforce plays without a partner.

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In this period, a five-handed form became popular; although MMT scarcely bothers to describe it, saying that it destroys all the subtlety of the game, it remains so. In this, the declarer always has a partner and plays with him against the other three.

### 9.9 Five-handed French Tarot (c. 1950-1970)

All is as in game 9.8, with the following exceptions. The dealer gives 15 cards to each player, in five rounds of three each, and, in the course of the deal, constitutes a talon of three cards only. The normal positive bids are *prise*, *pousse* and *garde (sans écart)*. The declarer, having made his discard, if any, calls a King that he does not have, or, if he has all four, a Queen; the player with the called card becomes his partner, but does not announce the fact. If the declarer in a *garde sans écart* calls a card in the talon, he perforce plays alone against the other four. A simple *poignée* consists of 8 trumps, a double one of 10 and a triple one of 15, which is worth 30 game points. The rules governing *chelem* are as in game 9.6; a *petit chelem*, if admitted, requires winning every trick but one. At the end of the hand, declarer and his partner, if successful, divide the largest *mouche* between them; the three opponents each pay as in game 9.6, and the two partners divide these payments between them. If declarer and his partner lose, they share in paying to each opponent the amount given under game 9.6, and also in doubling the *mouche*.

#### *Variants*

- (1) LJ and RT allow the declarer in a *prise* to purchase a card.
- (2) As before, Hér. and Cat. award 40 game points for a triple *poignée*.

(3) According to RT, if declarer and his partner lose, only the declarer doubles the *mouche*.

(4) The value of a *mouche* on MMT's alternative system of fixed *mouches* is here 120 game points.

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The game of Tarot is still played, or was played until recently, with a 78-card French-suited pack and in a manner very similar to the French game, in some French-speaking cantons of Switzerland, notably in certain villages in the Jura; it may have been introduced in this form from France, perhaps no earlier than the beginning of the XX century. A leaflet in French issued by the card-making firm of A.G. Müller gives the three-handed game as the principal form. Another leaflet in French, kindly shown us by Mr. Jim Simons, is entitled *Règles du jeu de Tarot* (AGM) and describes the same game, which is similar to game 9.6 but differs in a few respects, notably the more severe restriction on the discard.

#### 9.10 French-Swiss three-handed Tarot (c.1970-1990)

All is as in game 9.6, with the following exceptions. The positive bids are: '*je prends*', '*je pousse*', '*je garde*', '*petit chelem*' and '*grand chelem*'. When discarding, the declarer may discard no counting card – neither *oudlers* nor any court card. A *petit chelem* requires the winning of all the tricks but two: the Excuse has the privilege of winning the last trick in either a *petit* or a *grand chelem*. If any player holds the Petit but neither the Excuse nor any other trump, the deal is automatically annulled. The declarations, made before playing to the first trick, are as in game 9.6, a triple *poignée* being worth 30 game points. A player with the Excuse may not declare *pas d'atouts*. If the declarer has shown a *poignée*, he is paid for it by each opponent at the end of the hand if he wins, but pays each of them if he loses. The player *to the left of the declarer* leads to the first trick, although deal and play are counter-clockwise as usual. A player who wins the last trick with the Petit is paid 10 game points by each of the other two



players, regardless of which side he is on; one who loses the Petit in the last trick pays 10 game points to each of the other two, regardless of which side he is on. Scoring is as in game 9.6; if a *chelem* was bid, card points are ignored: the value is 100 game points for a *petit chelem* and 250 for a *grand chelem*. There is no special bonus for an unbid *chelem*.

### *Variants*

These all derive from the AGM leaflet.

- (1) There is no prohibition on putting the first or last three cards into the talon.
- (2) A bid of '*je garde avec écart*' is recognised, intermediate between *pousse* and *garde sans écart*; its basic value is 15 game points.
- (3) The contribution of the dealer to the original *mouche*, or when there is no *mouche* on the table, is only 10 game points, the same as the other players.
- (4) The contribution of 5 game points by the dealer to an existing *mouche* is suppressed.
- (5) The size of a *mouche*, gained or paid by the declarer, is invariable.

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The game is also played by four.

### 9.11 French-Swiss four-handed Tarot (c.1970-1990)

All is as in game 9.10, with the following exceptions. The dealer gives 18 cards, three at a time, to each of the four players. The *poignées* are as in game 9.7. A *grand chelem* is worth 200 game points; a *petit chelem*, gained by winning all the tricks but one, with the Excuse retaining its privilege of winning the last trick, is worth 100. The declarer plays alone against the other three in all contracts.

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The AGM leaflet also recognises a five-handed form.

### 9.12 French-Swiss five-handed Tarot (c.1970-1990)

All is as in game 9.10, with the following exceptions. The dealer gives 15 cards, three at a time, to each of the five players; the talon is of three cards only. The *poignées* are as in game 9.9. A *grand chelem* is worth 200 game points; a *petit chelem*, gained by winning all the tricks but one, with the Excuse retaining its privilege of winning the last trick, is worth 100. As in game 9.9, the declarer, having made his discard, if any, calls a King that he does not have, or, if he has all four, a Queen; the player with the called card becomes his partner, but does not announce the fact. The declarer and his partner share all gains or losses.

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After the composition of the leaflets mentioned above, the game has continued to grow in popularity in France; indeed, France is probably the only country in which the game of Tarot has greatly grown in popularity in modern times. It underwent further modification; we may take as the criterion for the fourth stage of its evolution the admission of a bid of *garde contre le chien*, the talon (now called the *chien*) being unseen until the end of play and then belonging to the declarer's opponents. Since the mid-1970s the popularity of the four-handed game, with there being in each hand one declarer playing alone against the other three, has grown steadily, promoted by the F.F.T. for the local and national tournaments it organises, often in duplicate form. Since so many hands are passed out, it is advisable, in informal play, to use two packs alternately. The F.F.T. rules forbid the use of *mouches*, whereas in 1973 Pierre Berloquin remarked indignantly (in RT) that many players, principally in the West and far from the traditional home of Tarot, 'denatured' the game by suppressing the *mouches*. A slight change in the rule governing the Petit is noteworthy. In all Tarot games played outside France in which there is a score for the trump I in the last trick, the bonus is for winning the last trick with the trump I, with a penalty for losing it in the last trick to the opponents; in some games losing it in the last trick to a partner is also penalised, on the ground that it was a failed attempt to

win the last trick with it. In French Tarot, too, the bonus has historically been for either winning the last trick with the Petit or capturing it in the last trick from an opponent, although, as we have seen, this was sometimes treated as a bonus for the individual player who achieved this feat, and not for him and his partners collectively. The rule is almost always stated very carelessly in French manuals and leaflets, and it has come to be understood in a manner different from that in any game played outside France. Namely, although the bonus is collective, it is awarded for winning the last trick *whenever that trick contains the Petit*. That is to say, if one of the opponents of the declarer plays the Petit to the last trick, and one of the other opponents wins the trick with a higher trump, those opponents obtain the bonus for the Petit *au bout*. The rule in this form is incorporated in the official rules promulgated by the F.F.T., and must be considered as now standard; but we believe that it arose from a misinterpretation of the original rule. We shall first set out the official F.F.T. rules for the four-handed game.

### 9.13 Contemporary French four-handed Tarot (F.F.T. rules)

#### *Deal*

Players cut for deal; the one drawing the lowest card deals 18 cards to each of the four players three at a time. He constitutes the talon (now called the *chien*) of six cards in the course of the deal, one card at a time, as he chooses, save that he may not put any of the first three or last three cards into it. If any player finds himself with the Petit but no other trump or the Excuse, the deal is annulled and passes to the next dealer.

#### *Bidding*

There are four possible positive bids: *Prise* (also called *Petite* or *Pousse*); *Garde*; *Garde sans*; and *Garde contre*. There is only one round of bidding, opened by the player to the dealer's right. If all pass, the deal passes to the next dealer. In *Prise* or *Garde*, the declarer shows the *chien* (talon) to the other players, takes it into his hand and discards six cards face down, which count for him at the end of

the hand; he may not discard Kings or *bouts*, and may discard trumps only if he has to, in which case he shows them to the other players. In *Garde sans* and *Garde contre*, the *chien* remains unseen to the end of the hand, then belonging to the declarer in the former case and to the opponents in the latter. The declarer, after making his discard if there is one, may announce *Chelem*, thereby contracting to win all the tricks.

### Play

The player to the right of the dealer leads to the first trick, save that if the declarer has announced *chelem*, he leads to it. The player sitting opposite to the declarer keeps beside him in a single pile the cards won by all the opponents. If the declarer announced *chelem*, and has the Excuse, he may not play it before the last trick if he wins all the preceding ones; in this case the Excuse wins the last trick, and, if he has won the last trick but one with the Petit, this counts as winning the *Petit au bout*. If the declarer loses a trick before the last, the Excuse reverts to its usual role. If one of the opponents has the Excuse, he plays it before the last trick and takes it back in the usual way; it is not surrendered to the declarer if he makes the *chelem*, but still counts as one of the three trump honours (now called *bouts*), and has a value of 4 points.

### Declarations

These are made immediately before playing to the first trick. A simple *poignée* is of 10 trumps and is worth 20 game points; a double *poignée* is of 13 trumps and is worth 30 game points; and a triple *poignée* is of 15 trumps (no longer of 18) and is worth 40 game points. Trumps must be shown to the required number. The Excuse counts as a trump for this purpose, but can be shown only if the player has no other trumps.

### Scoring

Each player keeps a running total of his score, positive or negative, so that at any time the four scores must sum to 0. If at the end of a hand the declarer has

reached his required total (fulfilled his contract), the payment he receives from each of his three opponents is calculated as follows. The basic score for the game is 25 game points. To this are added as many game points as the declarer has points in excess of his required total. If the Petit was played in the last trick, 10 game points are added if the declarer won the last trick, or 10 game points are subtracted if the opponents won it. The total so arrived is then multiplied by 2 if a *Garde* was bid, by 4 if a *Garde sans* was bid, and by 6 if a *Garde contre* was bid; if a *Prise* was bid, it is not multiplied. Finally, to the result is added the value of any *poignée*, whether shown by the declarer or an opponent.

*Example.* Suppose the declarer bid *Garde* and has the 21 and the Excuse among his cards, but one of his opponents played the Petit to the last trick, which was won by another of the opponents; one of the opponents declared a simple *poignée*. The declarer made 45 points; his required total was 41, so he has fulfilled his contract. He thus obtained 4 points more than his required total. This gives  $25 + 4 = 29$ , from which 10 game points must be subtracted for the Petit, making 19. This total is to be multiplied by 2 for the *Garde*, making 38 game points, to which 10 are to be added for the *poignée*, making 48. The declarer adds  $3 \times 48 = 144$  game points to his running total, while his opponents each subtract 48 game points from theirs.

Conversely, if the declarer's point-total falls short of that required (he fails to fulfil his contract), the payment he must make to each of his three opponents is reckoned in the same way. To the basic score of 25 game points are added as many game points as the declarer has points below his required total; if the Petit was played to the last trick, 10 game points are added if the opponents won the trick, or are subtracted if the declarer won it. (The bonus or penalty for the Petit *au bout* is thus independent of whether the declarer made his contract or not.) The total so arrived is then multiplied by 2 if a *Garde* was bid, by 4 if a *Garde sans* was bid, and by 6 if a *Garde contre* was bid; if a *Prise* was bid, it is not

multiplied. Finally, to the result is added the value of any *poignée*, whether shown by the declarer or an opponent.

*Example.* Suppose the declarer bid *Garde sans* and has the 21 but neither of the other trump honours (*bouts*) among his cards, and declared a simple *poignée*. He won the last trick with the Petit; his required total was 41 points, but he made only 36, falling short by 5 points.  $25 + 5 = 30$ , from which must be subtracted 10 for the Petit, making 20 game points; this must be multiplied by 4 for the *Garde sans*, making 80 game points. With 10 game points for the *poignée*, he owes each of the opponents 90 game points: he subtracts  $3 \times 90 = 270$  game points from his running total, while they each add 90 to theirs.

In a *chelem*, payments are calculated in the usual way, according to the declarer's bid and how many of the three *bouts* he has. If the declarer made *chelem* (won all the tricks) unannounced, each opponent pays him 200 game points in addition. If he made an announced *chelem*, each pays him in addition 400 game points. If the declarer announced *chelem* but failed to make it, payments are again on the usual basis, but, in addition, the declarer pays a penalty of 200 game points to each opponent.

### Signals

Certain conventional signals have come into use for opponents of the declarer to indicate to one another the composition of their hands. A comprehensive guide to these is given by Daniel Daynes and Emmanuel Jeannin-Naltet in their *Le Tarot moderne: la signalisation* (Paris, 1990).

The lead of a card from Ace to 5 of a suit not previously opened by the opponents promises possession of the King or Queen of that suit. The lead of one from 6 to 10 denies possession of the King or Queen.

The lead of an odd-numbered trump indicates that the player has at least seven trumps, or six with two higher than the 15. It is thus a sign that he has a strong hand, and asks partners to continue leading trumps. The lead of an even-

numbered trump has no special significance, but asks partners whether they think it a good idea to lead trumps.

The lead of a King also indicates that the player has a strong hand. The lead of a Cavalier promises possession of the Queen; if made by the player on the declarer's left, it also indicates a strong hand. The lead of a Jack (Valet) denies possession of the King or Queen, but is frequently used to indicate possession of the Cavalier; it suggests a weak hand.

Playing cards in descending order to the first two tricks in a suit ('petering' – not a term used by Tarot players) indicates a doubleton in that suit, if the suit was opened by a partner; it asks partners to continue with the suit. But to peter in a suit first led by the declarer – presumably his long suit – indicates possession of five or more cards in that suit (or four with the Excuse) headed by the King or Queen, with the likelihood that another partner will be able to trump it. To peter in trumps indicates that the Petit is in danger, and demands that trumps should not be led.

To play the Excuse to the first trick in trumps to which one's partner led also warns that the player has the Petit and that it is in danger; it requires his partners not to lead trumps any more.

It is usual for the partners of a player who led to the first trick to continue leading that suit, unless he led an even-numbered trump. To fail to do this by leading a different suit, especially when the first player indicated strength by leading a King, usually indicates possession of a strong hand and asks partners to continue in the new suit. (Sometimes the player has no cards in the suit led to the first trick, in which case his 'disobedience' is unavoidably misleading.) When an odd-numbered trump was led to the first trick, a failure to lead trumps indicates that the player has the Petit and that it is in danger, and asks partners not to lead trumps.

There are thus several ways in which an opponent of the declarer who has the Petit can notify his partners. (i) By playing the Excuse to the first trick in

trumps led by one of his partners; (ii) by 'petering' in trumps; (iii) by leading a suit when an odd-numbered trump was led to the first trick; and (iv) by playing an unnecessarily high trump to a trump trick. This last is also strategically advantageous, above all when done by the last of the opponents to play to the trick. The player with the Petit wants to divest himself of his high trumps so as to put the Petit under a high trump of one of his partners; but it is dangerous to play a high trump when a partner has yet to play to the trick, because it may force him to play just that higher trump by which the Petit might have been saved. It is in any case normal for one playing in trumps just before the declarer to 'uppercut' him by playing a high trump, in order to force out his 21; in this case playing unnecessarily high will not reveal possession of the Petit. If the player who led to the first trick showed by his lead of a King that he had a strong hand, another opponent's failure to lead the same suit may indicate possession of the Petit; the suit he leads may then show the best chance of saving the Petit.

### *Variants*

The earlier version of the F.F.T. rules differed in certain respects, as follows.

(1) *Grand chelem* figured as a separate bid, higher than *garde contre*. The declarer of a *chelem* took the *chien*, discarded and led to the first trick. In a *chelem*, the ordinary score for card points was ignored; the score was 600 game points, whether won or lost. An unannounced *grand chelem* was worth 300 game points.

(2) Any one of the three opponents of the declarer who showed a *poignée* received payment for it from each of the other three players, regardless of whether the contract was made or lost. Declarations of *pas d'atouts* (no trump, the Excuse *not* counting as a trump) and of *pas d'honneurs* (no court card and none of the *bouts*), each worth 10 game points, were admitted.



The F.F.T. rules also provide for the game with three players.

#### 9.14 Contemporary French three-handed Tarot (F.F.T. rules)

All is as in game 9.13, with the variants there noted, save for the following exceptions. The dealer gives 24 cards to each of the three players in six rounds of four each, constituting the *chien* of six cards in the process. The *poignées* require 13 trumps for a simple one, 15 for a double and 18 for a triple. The point-totals may include half-points; if the declarer is below his required total even by just  $\frac{1}{2}$  point, he has unequivocally lost. Point-totals are rounded to the nearest integer, in the declarer's favour if he has won, in the opponents' favour if he has lost.

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In the informal game there are many variations observed by players in different circles. Those given below are derived from various sources, including our own experiences when playing in France before 1980. A large number of books on French Tarot have been published in recent years; among these are:

Arn.: Patrick Arnett, *Le Tarot: règles, technique, conseils*, Paris, 1977, being an extract from his *Trois jeux, trois jours* (Paris, 1975).

Lau.: Claude-Marcel Laurent, *Le jeu de Tarots: règles et pratique*, Paris, 1975, which has replaced JT as the Bornemann booklet on the game;

AT: Michel Debost, Jean Berthier and Paul Dumas, *L'Art du Tarot*, Grenoble, 1977, a large book comprehensively discussing strategy;

Mar.: Benjamin Hannuna, *le jeu de tarot*, Marabout series, Verviers, 1979;

TM: Emmanuel Jeannin-Naltet and Martine Garrivet, *Le Tarot moderne*, Monaco, 1983;

BT: Daniel Daynes and Thierry Bonnion, *Les bases du Tarot*, Paris, 1997;

TRV: Daniel Daynes and Frédéric Sarian, *Le Tarot: ses règles et toutes ses variantes*, Paris, 2000.

To these may be added a leaflet (Sim.) by Paul Simpkins called *The Game of Tarot: rules*, issued in 1975 by an organisation based in Huddersfield called Brain

Games, derived from the author's experience playing in Douai, and a leaflet (Four.) issued at about the same time by the Spanish cardmaking firm of Fournier whose English-language version is oddly entitled *The new game of Tarock*, claiming to present the 'official rules of the game according to the European Federations', but in fact describing French Tarot.

### 9.15 Contemporary popular four-handed French Tarot

*Mouches* are used. The standard method – often varied – is that explained in the *Basic rules*: at the start of play, or whenever there is no *mouche*, the dealer contributes 20 game points to form a *mouche*. Before each deal, if there are *mouches*, the dealer adds 5 game points to the largest one. A successful declarer takes the largest *mouche* for himself. An unsuccessful one doubles the *mouche* if there is only one and it has not yet been doubled; otherwise he pays as much as there is in the largest *mouche* to form a new one. Apart from the *mouches*, the rules are as in game 9.13, but subject to the many variations listed below.

#### *Variants*

(1) TRV gives several optional variations, which may be combined, for the popular version of four-handed Tarot.

(i) *Tarot forcé*. This has two forms. The first simply requires the dealer to bid if all the other three players have passed.

Under the second form, the cards are dealt out into four hands, with the *chien*, but no one looks at them except the player to the dealer's right, who is always the declarer. He examines all four hands and chooses one to keep as his own. He then shuffles the three remaining hands and the *chien* together, gives them to the original dealer to cut, and deals them out to the his three opponents, constituting a new *chien* as he does so; he then chooses the contract, takes the *chien* and discards if appropriate, and as the player to the right of the original dealer, he leads to the first trick. The deal rotates in the usual way, each of the first round of four hands being

played in this manner. Then another round is played in which the player to the dealer's right is still the declarer and chooses among the four hands, but the player sitting opposite to the original dealer leads to the first trick; then a round in which the player to dealer's left leads, and finally a round in which the original dealer leads.

(ii) *Petit en dedans*. There are no scores for the *Petit au bout*. However, if the declarer wins the last trick with the *Petit*, his required total becomes 41 if he has the *Petit* as his only *bout*, 36 if he has two *bouts* and 31 if he has all three. Conversely, if the opponents win the last trick with the *Petit* or capture it from the declarer in the last trick, the declarer's required total becomes 61 if he has no *bouts*, 56 if he has one and 51 if he has two.

(iii) *Contre*. An opponent of the declarer may say '*contre*' (i.e. 'double') to the declarer's bid; by so doing he doubles the payment between him and the declarer, whether the declarer wins or loses. He also calls upon his partners to lead trumps. Each partner is free to join the *contre* or not as he chooses. The declarer is then free to announce a *surcontre* (redouble) if he wishes, in which case the payment between him and the player who said *contre* and any who joined the *contre* is quadrupled.

(2) Lau. also allows a *contre* as a regular feature of the game; for him the effect of this is not individual, but doubles the score for all the players. He also allows a *surcontre*, quadrupling the score, but surprisingly allows this to be said by a second opponent rather than by the declarer (an example shows that this is his genuine intention). This is contrary to the practice in all other card games, including Tarot games, in which doubling is allowed.

(3) Sim. is the only source to require deal and play to be clockwise; for him cards are dealt to the *chien* three at a time. Four. requires them to be

dealt to the *chien* two at a time. Arn. allows the dealer, if he wishes, to deal in nine rounds of two each, and gives it as the usual way of constituting the *chien* to put two cards into it at the end of the first three rounds of the deal. For AT one card is dealt to the *chien* at the end of each of the six rounds of the deal.

(4) AT allows a player with a singleton Petit to choose whether to annul the deal or not. Those with whom we played allowed such a player to declare the Petit *imprenable* (see variant (3) to game 9.6). For Mar., one with a singleton Petit may either, at his choice, annul the deal or declare the Petit *imprenable* just before he plays it to a trick.

(5) Lau., Arn., Mar. and Sim., in company with both groups of players with whom we played before 1980, admit a bid of *pousse* intermediate between *prise* and (simple) *garde*; AT admits *pousse* but not simple *garde*. One of the two groups with whom we played would not admit *garde sans*. Lau. allows a bid of *chelem*, higher than *garde contre*, but with the lead still made by the player to the right of the dealer. AT, Arn. and Sim. admit no *chelem* bids, but allow the declarer to announce *grand chelem*; for AT and Arn. he must do so just before he leads to the first trick, for Sim. any time before the tenth trick.<sup>5</sup> AT and Sim. also allow him to announce *petit chelem*, which Arn. does not; in a *petit chelem* the Excuse does not have the privilege of winning the last trick. For Sim. a player with the Excuse will make a *petit chelem* if he wins all but two tricks. As do the F.F.T. rules, Lau. allows a bonus for unannounced *chelem*, but none of the other sources does so. According to AT, a side that makes no tricks forfeits the Excuse, but the declarer does not forfeit his discard if he makes no tricks.

<sup>5</sup> This rule is stated for the five-handed game; the announcement might perhaps be allowed up to the twelfth trick in the four-handed one.

(6) Sim. specifies a round of declarations before the lead to the first trick. Lau. agrees with the F.F.T. scores for *poignées*. Arn., AT, and Sim. award 10 game points for a simple *poignée*, 20 for a double one and 30 for a triple. Mar. makes these scores 10, 20 and 40 respectively, but, unlike all other sources, has the score for a simple *poignée*, but not for a double or triple one, multiplied by 2, 4, 8 or 12 according to the contract if it is higher than *prise*. Sim. demands 18 trumps for a triple *poignée*; and one group with whom we played required 11 trumps for a simple *poignée*. AT admits a triple *poignée* of 15 trumps, with an additional one of 18 trumps, worth 40 game points. For Lau. and Arn., if the declarer shows a *poignée*, he is paid for it by each of the three opponents if he makes his contract, and pays each of them if he fails; but if one of the three opponents shows one, he is paid for it by each of the other three players, regardless of whether the contract is won or lost. This is the traditional rule; but, for Sim., the declarer, too, is paid for a *poignée* by each of the other three irrespectively of whether he makes the contract or not. For AT the payment for a *poignée* is *not* personal; the principle of solidarity holds. Hence, if one of the three opponents shows a *poignée*, each of them pays the declarer if he makes his contract, and is paid by him if he loses. Declarations of *pas d'atouts* (no trump) and of *pas d'honneurs* (no court card and none of the *bouts*), each worth 10 game points, are allowed by Lau., Arn. and Sim. AT replaces the last of these by the less demanding *pas de cartes habillées* (no court cards), as did those with whom we played. These negative declarations are known collectively as *misère* declarations, and, for AT, may be made by simply saying '*misère*', without specifying no trumps or no court cards. *Misère* declarations are always valued at 10 game points each. According to AT possession of the Excuse debars a declaration of *pas de cartes habillées*; Lau. agrees with the older F.F.T. rules that it does not debar a declaration of *pas d'atouts*,

while AT, Arn. and Sim. agree that it does. AT remarks that many players suppress the *misère* declarations. When they are admitted, payment for them is personal: each of the other three players pays the one making the declaration.

(7) Sim. lays down the unusual rule that the lead to the first trick is made by the player who first made a positive bid; this will often be the declarer. For Four., the lead to the first trick is made by the player to the right of the *declarer*, even when a *grand chelem* has been bid.

(8) For Lau., the payment for the *Petit au bout* is personal: if any player wins the last trick with the *Petit*, he is paid for it by each of the other three players; if he loses it in the last trick, he pays each of them. For AT, the principle of solidarity holds: if one of the declarer's opponents wins the last trick with the *Petit*, the declarer pays each of the three opponents, and if the declarer captures it in the last trick, all three opponents pay him. It appears that if one opponent captures the *Petit* in the last trick from another opponent, there is neither bonus nor penalty. For Arn., only the declarer gains a bonus or pays a penalty for the *Petit au bout*; if his *Petit* is captured in the last trick by an opponent, he pays a double penalty (20) to each opponent.

(9) For Lau., the base score is 25 game points, as for F.F.T.; for Arn., it is only 10 game points. For both, the multipliers are: *prise* 1; *pousse* 2; *garde* 4; *garde sans* 8; *garde contre* 12. AT and Sim. do not recognise multipliers: the difference between the declarer's required total and his actual total is simply added, unmultiplied, to the base score. This was also the practice of those with whom we played before 1980. These latter had, in one case, base scores of 10, 20, 30 and 50 game points for *prise*, *pousse*, *garde* and *garde contre* respectively (these did not admit *garde sans*); the other group had base scores of 0, 20, 40, 80 and 160 game points for *prise*, *pousse*, *garde*, *garde sans* and *garde contre* respectively.

These latter are also Sim.'s base scores, save that he awards a base score of 10 game points for *prise*. AT's base scores are 0, 10, 50 and 100 game points for *prise*, *pousse*, *garde sans* and *garde contre* respectively. Lau. awards 500 game points for *grand chelem* unannounced and 1000 game points for it when announced. Save for the earlier version of the F.F.T. rules and TM, which agrees with them, only Lau. recognises, optionally, a bonus for unannounced *chelem*. For *grand chelem*, announced or bid, Arn., like Lau., awards 1000 game points; AT awards it 250 game points, and Sim. 1600, or, on an alternative system, 300. Only AT and Sim. recognise a bonus for *petit chelem*, and then only when announced; for AT it is 150 game points and for Sim. 800, or, on the alternative system, 200. In all these cases, payment for a *chelem* supersedes the ordinary score for card points and, when *chelem* is announced rather than bid, for the contract.

(10) According to AT, when there is already a *mouche*, the dealer adds 10 game points rather than only 5 to the largest one; but a *mouche* is never doubled, an unsuccessful declarer always beginning a new one. For Arn., the contributions when there is no *mouche* are only 10 game points from the dealer and 5 from each of the other three, and 5 from the dealer when there is one; but no new *mouches* are created, the sole *mouche* being doubled whenever the declarer fails to make his contract (and thus often becoming very large). For those with whom we played, the only contribution when no *mouche* exists is of 10 game points, from the dealer alone; the dealer adds 10 game points to an existing *mouche* only when all passed in the last round, and an unsuccessful declarer's payment forms a new *mouche* whenever it is of 100 game points or more. Lau. gives several variations. Some suppress the 5 game points added by the dealer to the largest existing *mouche*; for some, the contribution when there is no existing *mouche* is of 10 game points from each of the four players; for

others, it is of 10 game points from the dealer alone. Some impose on an unsuccessful declarer a fixed payment to the table.

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### 9.16 Popular French three-handed Tarot (contemporary)

*Mouches* are used. Otherwise, all is as in game 9.14, with the variants given under game 9.15, and the following *further variants*.

(1) For Arn., Lau. and Sim., the deal is in eight rounds of three each. For AT, it is in six rounds of four each, as for F.F.T., but always with one card put in the *chien* at the end of each round.

(2) Lau. admits a bid of *petit chelem*, worth 100 game points, as a contract to take all but two of the tricks, as well as one of *grand chelem*, worth 250 game points. These must be interpreted as bonuses in addition to the regular score (say with a multiplier of 4), since otherwise it would never be worth bidding a *chelem*. AT and Sim. allow announcements of *petit chelem*, under the same conditions as those for *grand chelem*.

(3) For Sim. a triple *poignée* requires all 22 trumps and is worth 40 game points. For AT, Arn. and Sim., simple and double *poignées* are worth 10 and 20 game points respectively, and for the first two a triple *poignée* is worth 30; but AT admits in addition a declaration of 21 trumps, worth 40 game points. All sources allow *misère* declarations, worth 10 game points; AT has the same variation as under game 9.15, variant (6).

(4) According to Lau., the score is often rounded to the nearest multiple of 5, and according to Sim., to the nearest multiple of 10, again in the declarer's favour if he won and to his disadvantage if he lost.

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In informal play, the five-handed form is the most popular; the F.F.T. does not lay down rules for it. The most popular form remains that in which two players play against the other three, the declarer calling a King for a partner. It is



described by most of the sources, including TRV; Sim. devotes most of his account to this form, while the notices of it by Lau. and Arn. are cursory.

### 9.17 Five-handed French Tarot d'Appel (contemporary)

The dealer gives 15 cards to each of the five players, in five rounds of three cards each, constituting a *chien* of three cards only in the process. (He puts the three cards into the *chien* one at a time according to Laur., but all together according to Sim.; he must not put any of the first or last three into the *chien* according to Laur. or Arn.) The admissible bids are *prise* or *petite*, *pousse*, *garde*, *garde sans* and *garde contre*. The declarer, if he has made a bid below *garde sans*, takes the *chien*, showing it to the others, and discards three cards, under the usual constraints. After he has discarded, he calls (names) a King that he does not have, in order to obtain a partner; if he has all four Kings, he calls a Queen. The holder of the called card becomes his partner but does not reveal the fact (save by playing the called card). Until the called card is played, each player keeps beside him the cards he has won in tricks. It is allowable for the declarer to call a King that he *does* have, in which case he will be playing on his own against the other four, though they will not at first realise this. According to Arn., but to no other source, the declarer may, after discarding, announce a *grand chelem*; if he does so, he leads to the first trick. The *poignée* declarations are for 8, 10 or 13 trumps, worth 10, 20 and 30 game points respectively. If made by an opponent of the declarer, he is paid its value at the end of the hand by each of the other four players; if made by the declarer or his partner, its value is added to what each opponent has to pay if the contract is made, and to what the two of them have to pay each opponent if they lose. Declarations of *pas d'atouts* (no trumps) and *pas d'honneurs* (no counting cards) are admitted, each worth 10 game points; these are personal and their value is paid to the player making one of them by each of the other four players. (For Lau., the Excuse does not count as a trump for a *pas d'atouts* declaration; for Arn. and Sim., it does.) If, in a *garde sans* or *garde*

*contre*, the called card is found to be in the *chien*, the declarer is deemed to have played on his own against the other four; in such a case, the *chien* ought to be his even if he bid *garde contre*. The total amount paid by or to each opponent is calculated as follows: the base value of the contracts, which is always 10 game points, is added to the difference between the required total and the actual point-total of the declarer's side, and the result multiplied by 1, 2, 4, 8 or 12 according as the declarer's bid was *prise*, *pousse*, *garde*, *garde sans* or *garde contre*. To this is further added the value, unmultiplied, of any *poignée* shown by the declarer or his partner. The declarer and his partner share equally in winnings and losses. According to Lau., bonus and penalty for the Petit in the last trick are individual: if any player wins the last trick with the Petit, each of the other four players pays him 10 game points, multiplied by the multiplier applicable to the contract; if he loses the Petit in the last trick to any other player, he pays a corresponding number of game points to each of the other four.

#### *Variants.*

(1) TRV lists four variations, which may be combined. These are:

(i) The declarer calls a card *before* exposing the *chien*.

(ii) The declarer may call any card whatever (this variation is also mentioned by Mar., which however prohibits calling the 21).

(iii) It is forbidden to lead to the first trick a card of the same suit as the called card.

(iv) The declarer and his partner share equally in winnings and losses.

(In all the other sources, this is the general rule. See variant (8) below for the rule considered standard by TRV.)

(2) For Lau. and Four. the values of a single and a double *poignée* are 20 and 30 game points respectively. Four. recognises a triple *poignée* of 13 trumps, worth 40 game points, but Lau. and Sim. require 15 trumps for a triple *poignée*, again worth 40 game points.

(3) For Lau. and Four., the base value of the contract is 25 game points, with the same multipliers as above according to the bid. Sim. does not apply a multiplier to the difference between the actual point-total and the required total, but allots a base score of 160 game points for a contract of *garde contre*, successful or unsuccessful. For Arn. and Laur., the score for the difference between actual and required total is rounded to a multiple of 5 before being added to the base score and subjected to the multiplier; a difference of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  is rounded to the disadvantage of the declarer's side.

(4) For Sim., *poignée* declarations are personal, their value, unmultiplied, being paid to the player making one of them by each of the other four players regardless of the outcome of the hand.

(5) Sim. allows the declarer, but not his partner, to announce *grand chelem* or *petit chelem* before the tenth trick; *petit chelem* requires winning all the tricks but one, or all but two if the declarer has the Excuse. *Grand chelem* then has a value of 1600 game points and *petit chelem* of 800 (alternatively of 300 and 200 respectively). Mar. allows an announcement of *grand chelem* to be made by either the declarer or his partner, at any time before the twelfth trick; it is worth 1000 game points, won or lost. The partner of one who announces *chelem* may decline to be bound by it; in this case, he does not pay if it fails, and, if it succeeds, is not paid for it but only, in the normal way, for making the contract. Laur. admits *grand chelem* as the highest bid, in which case declarer takes the *chien* and discards. The declarer and his partner are then paid by or pay to each opponent 200 game points each.

(6) Lau. allows a bid of *grand chelem*; the declarer takes the *chien* and discards; but the player to the dealer's right still leads to the first trick.

(7) For Sim., the lead to the first trick is made by the player who made the first positive bid. He may not lead a card of the same suit as the called

card unless he is the declarer. Mar. forbids the lead of a card of the same suit as the called card unless it is the called card itself.

(8) According to TRV, the standard practice is that if the declarer had a partner, they divide receipts or payments in the ratio 2:1, the declarer receiving or paying the greater amount.

(9) According to Arn., if the declarer or his partner wins the last trick with the Petit in it, each of the three opponents pays 10 game points, irrespective of the contract, which the declarer and his partner share between them; if the declarer or his partner loses the Petit in the last trick to one of their opponents, each of them pays a double penalty of 30 game points, which are divided between the opponents. It is unclear what happens if the declarer captures the Petit from his partner in the last trick, or conversely, or if one of their opponents plays the Petit to the last trick.

(10) According to Arn., the deal is annulled if any player is dealt the Petit but neither any other trump of the Excuse.

(11) There are *mouches*, the largest of which declarer and his partner share when they win, but which the declarer alone doubles when they lose.

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AT does not recognise the foregoing version, but only one, that is also described by TRV, in which the declarer plays on his own against the other four players. This development is in line with the general direction in which modern French Tarot has evolved. First the old Tarot d'Appel was replaced by a four-handed form in which the declarer played alone. Then a five-handed version was introduced which employed the old idea of calling a card for a partner. Now some players have eliminated that in favour of a form with five players in which the declarer plays alone.

### 9.18 Five-handed Solo form of French Tarot (contemporary)

The dealer distributes 14 cards to each of the five players, in four rounds of three cards each followed by one of two cards each (TRV), or in one of two cards each followed by four of three each (AT); he constitutes a *chien* of eight cards in the process (AT requires him to do this by putting two cards into it after each round of three cards each). A player who finds himself with the Petit but no other trump or the Excuse may annul the deal, and the next dealer gives the cards in a new deal. Possible positive bids are *prise* or *petite*, *pousse*, *garde sans* and *garde contre*; there is no *chelem* bid. The declarer, if he has made a bid below *garde sans*, takes the *chien*, showing it to the others, and discards eight cards, under the usual constraints; he may discard trumps only if he has to, and must then announce how many. *Poignées* of 8, 10 or 13 trumps, worth respectively 10, 20 and 30 game points, may be declared before playing to the first trick; there are no *misère* declarations. Before he plays to the first trick, the declarer may announce either *grand chelem* or *petit chelem*; in a *grand chelem* the Excuse has its privilege of winning the last trick, in a *petit chelem*, which requires winning every trick but one, it does not. Whether the declarer wins or loses, an odd  $\frac{1}{2}$  point is rounded down. There is no multiplier: the declarer is paid by or pays to each opponent the difference between his point-total and the required total, plus 10 game points in a *pousse*, 50 in a *garde sans* and 100 in a *garde contre*; there is thus no payment either way if the declarer makes exactly his required total in a *prise*. If a *poignée* was declared, its value is added to the payment made to or by the declarer, regardless of who declared it. If a *chelem* was announced, the ordinary payments for the contract are disregarded, and the declarer is paid by or pays to each opponent 150 game points for *petit chelem* and 250 for *grand chelem*; payments for *poignées* and for the Petit *au bout* still apply. If the declarer makes all the tricks without having announced *chelem*, payments are made on the ordinary basis, but the opponents must surrender the Excuse; they do not surrender the *chien* in a *garde contre*. Likewise if the declarer makes no tricks,

he must surrender the Excuse if he had it, but not the discard (or the *chien* in a *garde sans*). The *Petit au bout* is worth 10 game points. Payment for it is independent of whether the declarer fulfilled his contract or not: each opponent pays the declarer if he won it in the last trick, and he pays each opponent if one of them did so. *Mouches* are used, as in game 9.14.

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TRV describes several forms of Tarot played in France which go unmentioned in other books. Among these is a version for six players.

### 9.19 Six-handed French Tarot (contemporary)

The six players form three fixed partnerships of two each, partners facing each other across the table. The dealer gives 12 cards to each player in four rounds of three each, in the process constituting a *chien* of 6 cards, which are put into it only one at a time. Bids of *petite* (= *prise*), *pousse*, *garde*, *garde sans* and *garde contre* are admitted, as is also *contre* (double) said by a player not the partner of the bidder who made the highest bid so far. The bidding may continue for more than one round, and, unusually, a player who previously passed may re-enter the bidding. But if the highest bid was *petite* or *pousse*, the hands are thrown in, whether or not *contre* was said, without any score being marked, and there is a new deal. A bid of *petite* or *pousse*, or a *contre* said to *petite* or *pousse*, indicates possession of at least one *bout* (trump honour). (It is unclear from the text of TRV whether this is merely a convention or an actual rule.) The declarer of a *garde* shares the *chien* with his partner, each taking three cards and discarding three under the usual constraints. It is not quite clear from TRV how this sharing is done – perhaps all six cards are turned face up, the declarer selects three and his partner takes the others. The other four players are in temporary alliance against the declarer and his partner. The scoring system is as under game 9.13, the declarer and his partner each being paid by or paying two of the players in defence; the numbers of trumps needed for *poignées* is not specified by TRV.

*Variant*

The declarer takes the whole *chien*, discarding six cards.

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TRV also describes several games for two players. Tarot is not in fact a very good game for two, but devotees may enjoy one of these forms when there are no more players.

**9.20** La Découverte (France, contemporary)

There are two players, each of whom is dealt a hand of 12 cards, plus 12 packets of two cards arranged on the table in two rows of 6, the top card of each packet face up and the bottom card face down. The dealing process is as follows. The dealer gives three cards for his opponent's hand, then three cards face down in a row in front of himself, then three cards face down in a row in front of his opponent, then one card into the *chien*, then three cards for his own hand, then three more cards face down to complete the first row in front of his opponent, then three more cards face down to complete the first row in front of himself, then one more card into the *chien*. He then repeats this whole procedure, forming a second row of cards face down in front of each player. He then repeats it twice more, but now putting a card face up on each of the concealed cards in front of each player. At the end each player has a hand of 12 cards, and 24 more cards in 12 packets of two cards each in front of him, the top card exposed; there is also a *chien* of 6 cards. The two players now bid. The highest bidder (unless he has bid higher than simple *garde*) takes the *chien*, shows it to his opponent, takes it into his hand and discards six cards under the usual constraints; he may discard cards only from his actual hand, not from among those exposed in front of him. The opponent of the dealer leads to the first trick. In playing to a trick, each player may use, and must treat as available to him, any of the cards remaining in his hand, and any of those exposed in front of him. When any card is played from the top of one of the twelve packets, the card below it is turned face up and becomes

available for play. Nothing is said by TRV about *poignées* (they are surely best suppressed in this game), or about scoring.

#### *Variants*

(1) There are 9 packets of two cards each (one hidden, one face up) in three rows of three in front of each player; each player has a hand of 18 cards and there is a *chien* of 6.

(2) There are 6 packets of two cards each (one hidden, one face up) in front of each player; each player has a hand of 24 cards and there is a *chien* of 6.

#### 9.21 La Tirette (France, contemporary)

There are two players. The dealer gives 24 cards, four at a time, to his opponent and himself, constituting a *chien* of 6 cards in the process. The remaining 24 cards are placed face down between the two players to form a stock. The players bid in the usual way, and, unless the declarer made a bid higher than simple *garde*, he takes the *chien*, showing it to his opponent, and discards six cards. The dealer's opponent leads to the first trick. While the stock lasts, the player who won a trick takes the first card of the stock into his hand without showing it, and the other player takes the second card. Again, TRV says nothing about *poignées* or about scoring.

#### *Variants*

(1) Each player drawing a card from stock shows it to his opponent before putting it into his hand.

(2) The card at the bottom of the stock is turned face up beside the stock; it will be taken by the player who does not win the 12th trick. (If it is a valuable card, both players will strive to avoid winning that trick.)



### 9.22 Tarot with a Mort (France, contemporary)

There are two players. The dealer deals *three* hands of 24 cards, four at a time, constituting a *chien* of 6 cards in the process. The hand to the dealer's right is his opponent's; that to his left is the 'mort' or dead hand. The players bid while the mort remains face down; unless the declarer made a bid higher than simple *garde*, he takes the *chien*, showing it to his opponent, and discards six cards. The lead to the first trick is made by the player who did not deal; after he has made it, the opponent of the declarer exposes the mort and arranges it in suits on the table. The hands are then played out in tricks, one card being contributed to each trick by the mort; it is the declarer's opponent who decides which card shall be played from the mort. The rules of game 9.16 are observed.

#### *Variant*

The only bids allowed are *garde sans* and *garde contre*.

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Finally, along with a number of games played with the Tarot pack but not belonging to the Tarot family, TRV describes a reverse game.

### 9.23 Nullo (France, contemporary)

There are four players, each playing for himself. The dealer gives 18 cards to each player, three at a time, constituting a *chien* of 6 cards. There is no bidding, and the talon is left unseen to the end of the hand and then belongs to no one. The player to the dealer's right leads to the first trick. Play is under the usual rules, save that the Petit may not be led to any trick except the last, and that the Excuse, if played to the last trick, still belongs to the one who played it. The hand is won by the player who has the lowest point-total.

#### *Variants*

- (1) With three players; each has 24 cards and there is a *chien* of 6 cards.
  - (2) With five players; each has 15 cards and there is a *chien* of 3 cards.
-



**Plate I:** Tarot de Marseille: 1a trump XXI (the World); 1b the Fool; 2a Cavalier of Cups; 2b trump II (the Popess); 2c trump V (the Pope). From the collection of Michael Dummett, with kind permission.

XVII-century Milanese card: 1c Cavallo of Cups. With kind permission from the Civica Raccolta delle Stampe Achille Bertarelli, Castello Sforzesco, Milan.



Plate II: Tarot de Marseille: 1a trump I (le Bateleur); 1b trump XII (le Pendu - the Hanged Man); 1c trump XVI (la Maison Dieu - the Tower); 2a King of Coins; 2b Ace of Batons; 2c 7 of Swords. From the collection of Michael Dummett, with kind permission.



Plate III: Tarot de Besançon, Austria (Slovakia): 1a the Fool (Sküs); 1b trump II (Juno); 1c trump V (Jupiter); 2a Kavall of Cups; 2b trump XXI (Mond); 2c Ace of Batons. From the collection of David Temperley, with kind permission.



Plate IV: Repr. pk by Jacques Viéville: 1a trump XII (le Pendu - the Hanged Man); 1b trump XVI (la Foudre - the Lightning); 1c trump XVII (la Lune - the Moon). Repr. pk by F. I. Vandendorre (Brussels, late XVIII century): 2a trump II (l'Espagnol, Capitano Fracasse [misspelled Eracasse]); 2b the Fool; 2c 2 of Cups. From the collection of Michael Dummett, with kind permission.



Plate V: French-suited Grosstarock pack (Animal Tarot): 1a trump II; 1b Kavall of Diamonds; 1c Jack of Clubs; 2a Sküs (= Fool); 2b trump XXI (Mond); 2c trump I (Pagat). From the collection of David Temperley, with kind permission.



Plate VI: Modern Swiss pack: 1a trump I (le Bateleur); 1b trump II (Juno); 1c trump V (Jupiter); 2a trump XXI (le Monde - the World); 2b Queen of Coins; 2c Cavalier of Batons. From the collection of Michael Dummett, with kind permission.



Plate VII: Tirolese 66-card pack: 1a trump 1 (Pagat); 1b Sküs (= Fool); 1c trump XI; 2a Kavall of Hearts; 2b King of Spades; 2c trump V. From the collection of David Temperley, with kind permission.





Plate VIII: Modern Tarocco piemontese: 1a 9 of Swords; 1b Cavallo of Cups; 1c Queen (Donna) of Batons; 2a trump 12 (l'Appeso - the Hanged Man); 2b trump 20 (l'Angelo - the Angel); 2c trump 21 (il Mondo - the World). From the collection of Michael Dummett, with kind permission.



Plate IX: French 'German' Tarot, c. 1900: 1a trump 2; 1b trump 19; 1c Excuse (Fool); 2a King of Diamonds; 2b Queen of Spades; 2c Cavalier of Hearts. From the collection of Michael Dummett, with kind permission.



Plate X: Modern French Tarot: 1a Excuse; 1b trump 1 (Petit); 1c trump 21; 2a King of Spades; 2b Cavalier of Hearts; 2c Queen (Dame) of Clubs. From the collection of Michael Dummett, with kind permission.



Plate XI: Modern French Tarot: 1a trump 13; 1b trump 7; 1c trump 5; 2a 4 of Hearts; 2b Ace of Clubs; 2c Jack (Valet) of Diamonds. From the collection of Michael Dummett, with kind permission.

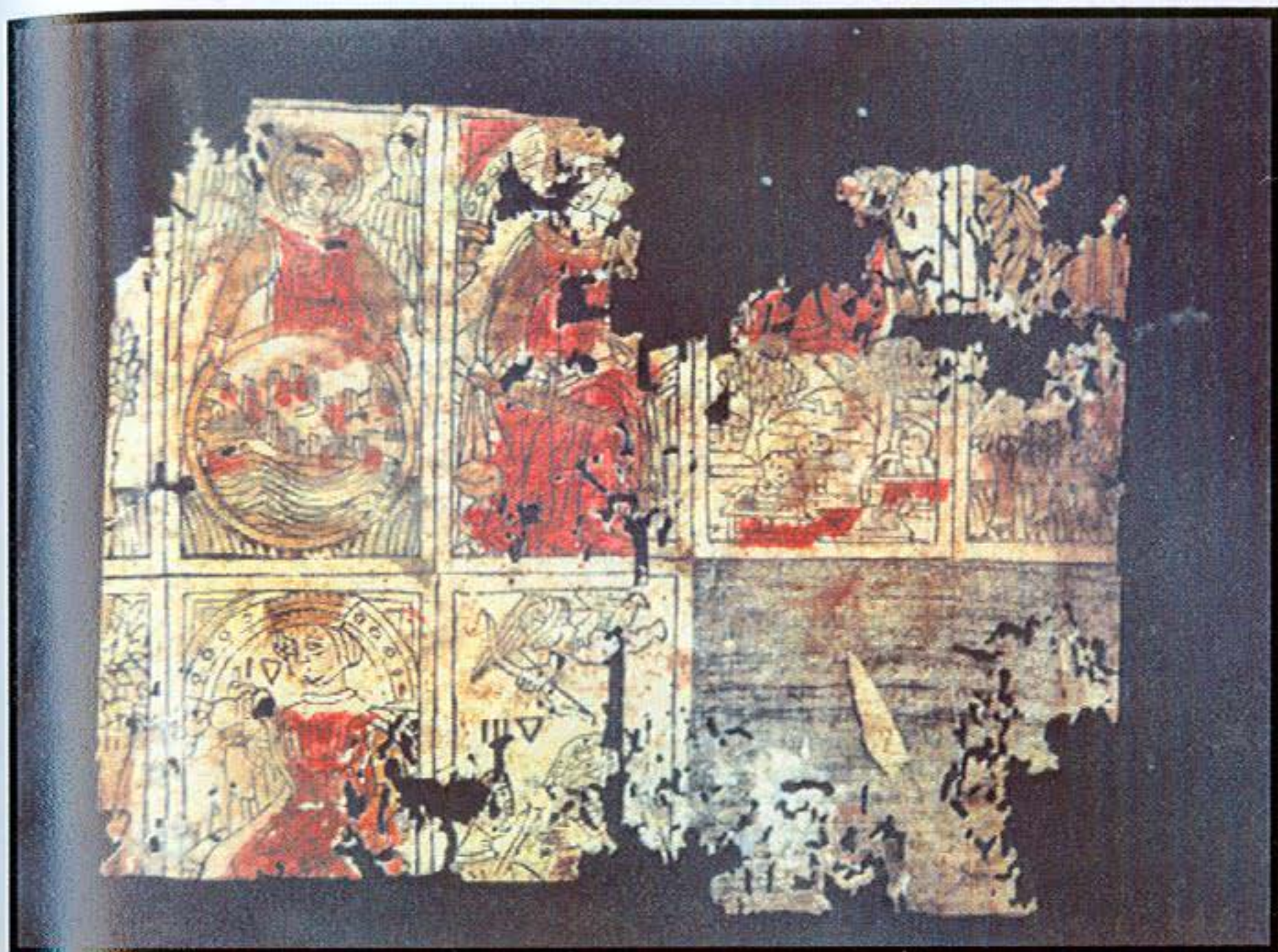


Plate XIIa: Uncut sheets of Ferrarese tarocchi. 1a the World (highest trump, unnumbered); 1b trump XX Justice; 1c trump XVIII the Angel; 1d XVIII the Sun; 2a trump VI Temperance; 2b trump VIII Love; 3a Queen of Cups; 3b Jack (Fante) of Batons; 3c Maid (Fantina or Fantesca) of Coins; 3d trump I (Bagatto); 4a trump XII (the Hanged Man); 4b trump XI (the Hunchback = the Hermit); 4c Queen of Cups; 4d Queen of Diamonds; 4e Queen of Hearts; 4f Queen of Spades.

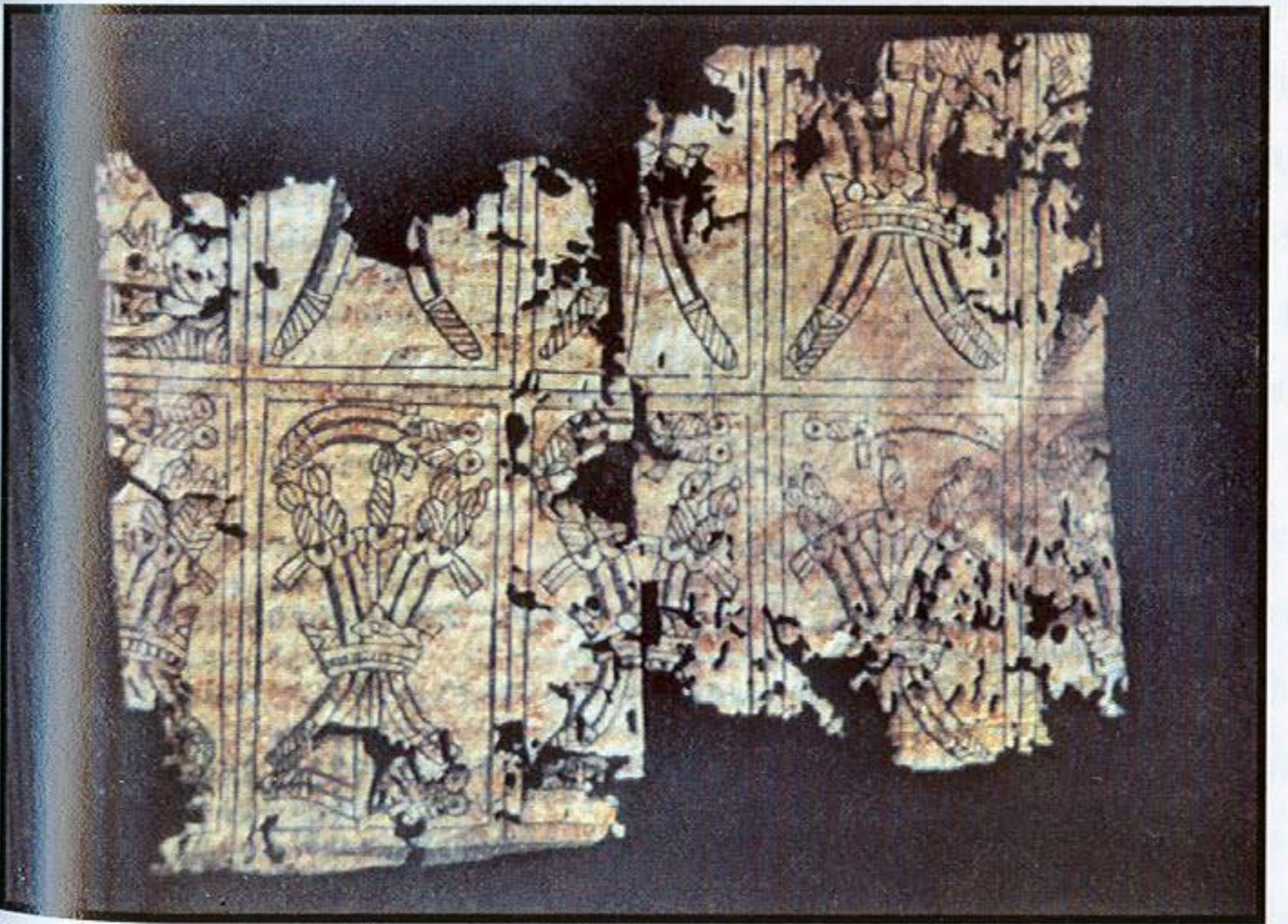
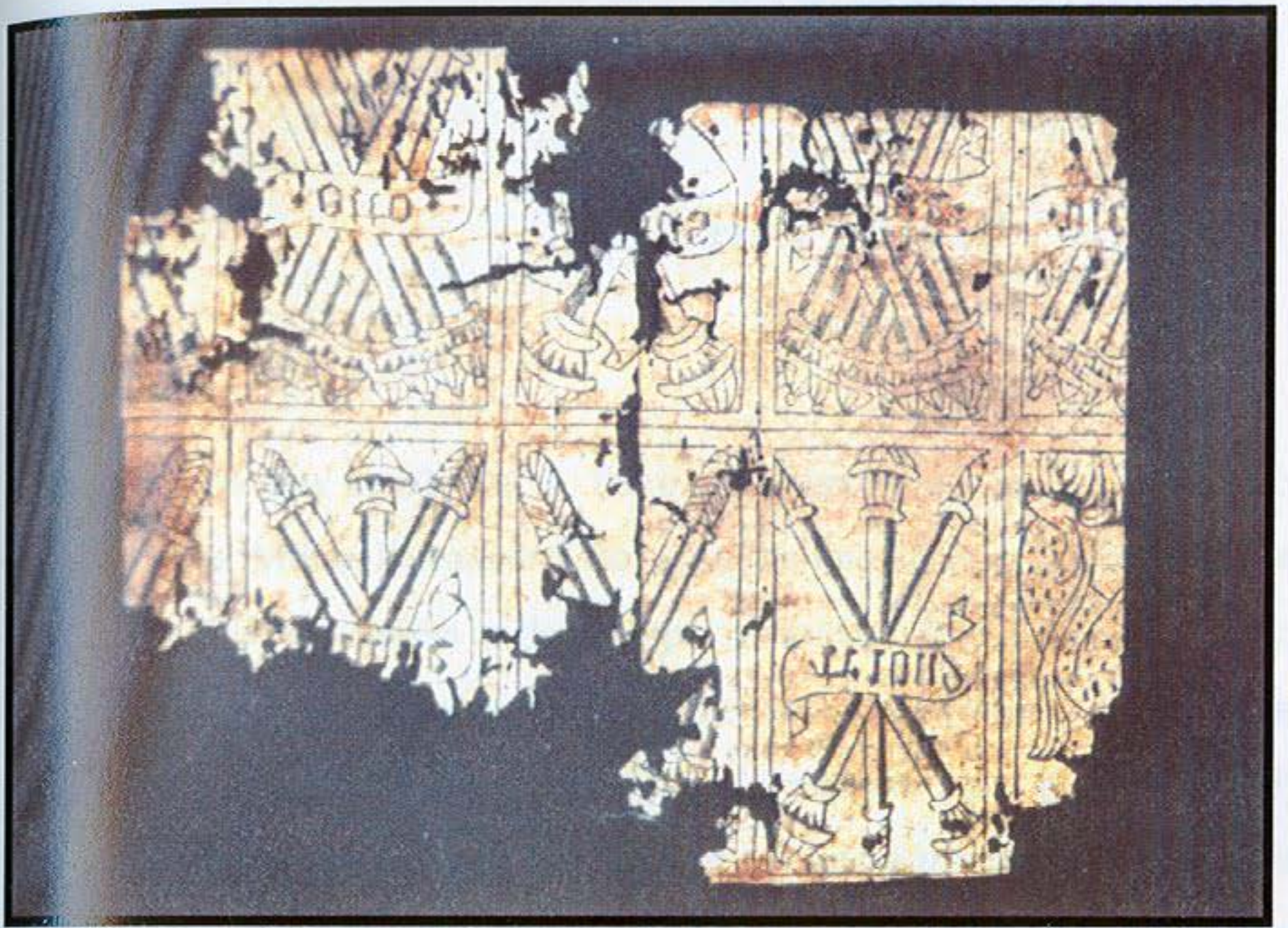


Plate XIIb: Uncut sheets of Ferrarese tarocchi. 1a 8 of Batons; 1b 2 of Batons; 1c 8 of Batons; 1d 9 of Batons; 2a 5 of Batons; 2b 4 of Batons; 2c 3 of Batons; 2d Ace of Batons (held by leopard); 3a 2 of Swords; 3b 3 of Swords; 3c 4 of Swords; 4a 9 of Swords; 4b 8 of Swords; 4c 7 of Swords. From the collection of Silvio Berardi, with kind permission.



## PART II

### CHAPTER 10

#### Ferrara

As we saw in Chapter 1, there were three great original centres of the game of Tarot: Milan, Ferrara and Bologna: the line of descent from each can be traced by the different orders of the trumps observed in each tradition. This criterion shows that the Ferrarese form of the game spread northwards, to Venice and to Trent; in neither of those two cities does it appear to have become greatly popular. In Ferrara itself, on the other hand, it enjoyed a tremendous vogue, especially at the court of the d'Este rulers, from the early XV century until the end of the XVI; it is from the court account-books of 1442 that we have the first documentary references to Tarot cards. In 1598, however, Lucrezia d'Este, duchess of Urbino, renounced on behalf of her nephew Cesare his claim to the ducal throne of Ferrara in favour of the Papacy. It was from the Pope that the Estensi held the dukedom of Ferrara, and Pope Clement VIII refused, on the ground of his illegitimacy, to recognise the right of Cesare d'Este to succeed Duke Alfonso II. Cesare removed himself to Modena, a dukedom that the Estensi held from the Emperor, and Cardinal Aldobrandini entered Ferrara to govern it on behalf of the Pope, who, with his successors henceforth became its direct overlord. There is no sign that the popularity of the game of Tarot survived the move to Modena, either in Modena or in Ferrara itself. The Ferrarese form of the game may be said to have died out at the end of the XVI century, or very soon afterwards.

It appears to be in Ferrara that the practice of numbering the trump cards began. Two sheets from the late XV century for a Tarot pack which can be



assigned with almost complete certainty to Ferrara are to be found in several collections; between them they show the Matto, all twenty-one trumps and all sixteen court cards.<sup>1</sup> On these, all the trumps are numbered save the highest, the World. There are also several literary sources which list the trumps in the Ferrarese order.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Such sheets are held in the Museum of Fine Arts (Szépművészeti Múzeum), Budapest, the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and the private collection of Signor Silvio Berardi of Bologna. Two separate cards from this pack, the Angel and the Queen of Batons, are in the private collection of Mr. Theodore Donson of New York. Signor Berardi's holding is particularly important, because it demonstrates that two sheets of numeral cards of the suits in the Budapest Museum and one such sheet in the Cary collection at Yale (ITA 5S) belong to the same pack.

<sup>2</sup> There are three such *tarocchi appropriati* poems, associating each of 22 ladies with one of the trumps: an anonymous one entitled 'Trionphi de Tarocchi appropriati' relating to ladies of the court of Ferrara, contained in a codex in the Biblioteca Estense in Modena (Gaspari Sardi, *Adversaria*, cod. lat. 228 =  $\alpha$ . W. 2,11) dated by Giulio Bertoni to 1520-1550 and published by him in his *Poesie leggende, costumanze del medio evo*, Modena, 1917, pp. 220-1; one entitled 'Triomphi composti sopra li Terrocchi in Laude delle famose Gentildonne di Vinegia' ('Vinegia' being a variant of 'Venezia') by Troilo Pomeran da Cittadella, of which there is a copy in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice (see also S. R. Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, 1986, pp. 9 & 185, and F. Pratesi, 'Italian Cards: New Discoveries', no. 7, *The Playing Card*, Vol. XVII, 1988, pp. 58-65); and 'Il Trionfo dei Tarocchi', written at Trent in 1547 Leonardo Colombino, in the Biblioteca Comunale, Trent (cat. no. T II g 499), published as *Il trionfo tridentino* by Pietro Larcher, Trent, 1858 (see Albino Zenatti, *Rappresentazioni sacre nel Trentino*, Rome, 1883, 2nd edn. Bologna 1978, pp. 16-22, and Pietro Marsili, 'Quando il cosmo stava nelle carte', *L'Adige*, 10 August 1989, pp. 22-3). The trumps are listed in order in the *Risposta* of Vincenzo Imperiali of about 1550, mentioned below. Prose sources are: a sermon 'De Ludo' contained in a volume of sermons now in the U.S. Playing-Card Co. Museum in Cincinnati, formerly owned by Robert Steele, the pages of which have watermarks of about 1500; Alessandro Citolini, *La Tipocosmia*, Venice, 1561, pp. 482-3; an anonymous manuscript 'Discorso' of about 1570, with copies in the Biblioteca Universitaria of Bologna (1072 XIII.F), the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Florence (G. Capponi 24) and the Bibliothèque in Paris; Tomaso Garzoni, *La Piazza universale*, Venice, 1585, p. 574; and a manuscript Latin list by Ulisse Aldovrandi (1552-1605), Misc. A.21.11 in the Biblioteca Universitaria of Bologna and published by L. Frati in *La Tavola Metodica dei Giuochi di U. Aldovrandi*, Bologna, 1904.

In detail, the Ferrarese order of the trumps was as follows:

|       |                            |      |             |
|-------|----------------------------|------|-------------|
|       | the World                  | X    | the Wheel   |
| XX    | Justice                    | VIII | Fortitude   |
| XIX   | the Angel                  | VIII | Love        |
| XVIII | the Sun                    | VII  | the Chariot |
| XVII  | the Moon                   | VI   | Temperance  |
| XVI   | the Star                   | V    | the Pope    |
| XV    | the Fire (= the Tower)     | IIII | the Emperor |
| XIV   | the Devil                  | III  | the Popess  |
| XIII  | Death                      | II   | the Empress |
| XII   | the Hanged Man             | I    | the Bagatto |
| XI    | the Old Man (= the Hermit) |      |             |

Two incomplete XVI-century packs confirm this order, so far as they go: four trumps, Love, the Hanged Man, the Star and the Sun, numbered as above, are among nine cards in the Museo delle Arti e Tradizioni Popolari in Rome; and an incomplete classicised pack in the Bibliothèque Municipale of Rouen has equivalents of the Emperor, the Pope, Fortune (= the Wheel), Time (= the Old Man or Hermit), the Devil and the Star, likewise numbered as above. The trump order is also confirmed by the literary sources, with two main variations: Garzoni, the sermon 'De ludo' and the Ferrarese *tarocchi appropriati* poem reverse the order of the Popess and Emperor; much more importantly, the sermon reverses that of Love and the Chariot.<sup>3</sup>

At the early date, there appears to have been, not a Ferrarese standard pattern, but a distinctive Ferrarese type, varying in detail from one example to another. There are sheets for three other packs of this type, none of which we

<sup>3</sup> This reversal may possibly be attributed to Imperiali also. He runs through the trumps in descending order, but his intention is of course not to give information but to make amusing verses for those already familiar with the cards. But he probably took Love to rank higher than the Chariot. The relevant lines of the *Risposta* are:

Quest'altr' Amor col suo carro in fracasso  
 Ä terra getta; et da spavento e horrore  
 Ä quella, c'hä due uasi, un'alto, e un basso.

(Love with his clattering chariot throws this other [Strength] to the ground; and gives fear and horror to her who has two vases, one high, one low [i.e. Temperance].)

have any reason to suppose to have been a Tarot pack.<sup>4</sup> In these, the Swords are curved, but do not intersect on the numeral cards; the Batons also do not intersect, but the numeral cards bear scrolls with their numbers written out as words. The court cards are often bizarre. In the Tarot pack, the lowest court figure of Coins is female (a *Fantina* rather than a *Fante*). In the other pack of which Mr. Donson has some separate cards, the suit of Cups has a Queen instead of a King, and a *Fantina* instead of a *Fante*, all the other court figures being male. In the incomplete XVI-century pack in the Rome Museum, however, the five numeral cards have quite different and far more conventional designs.

It is not possible to make any accurate reconstruction of the Ferrarese game. A Latin treatise of 1456 by the Ferrarese jurist Ugo Trotti 'Tractatus de multiplici ludo' mentions the game of Tarot (*triumphi*) for four players, but does not tell us the rules. One source from which we might have hoped to receive help proves to have none to give. The Ferrarese poet Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441-1494) was the author of the verse epic *Orlando Innamorato* to which Ariosto's more famous *Orlando Furioso* was a sequel. He also designed a special Tarot pack, with suits of Whips, Eyes, Arrows and Vases and non-standard trump subjects, and composed 78 tercets, each to be inscribed on one of the cards, together with two sonnets, each to be inscribed separately on a special card. These verses were printed separately, as two sonnets and five *capitoli*, in a volume of poems by different hands published in Venice in 1523.<sup>5</sup> The cards

<sup>4</sup> Of one, five separate cards are in the private collection of Mr. Theodore Donson, two sheets are in the Budapest Museum and one sheet in the Cary collection at Yale (ITA sheet 1S); of a second pack, two sheets are in the Cary collection (ITA sheets 6S and 2S), with some fragments in the Budapest Museum; and of the third, five fragments from two sheets are in the Museo "Fournier" de Naipes de Alava in Vitoria, and several fragmentary sheets reported in *Kartofilen* (Stockholm), no. 3-4, December 1993, pp. 23-4, and sold at auction at Sotheby's, London, in the same year. The Budapest Museum has a sheet consisting of six copies of the 10s of each suit, intended for the second or perhaps the first of these.

<sup>5</sup> *Amore di Hieronimo Beniueni Fiorentino ... Et una Caccia di Amore bellissima & cinq: Capituli, sopra el Timore, Zelosia, Speranza, Amore, & uno Trionpho del Mondo, Composti per il Conte Matteo Maria Boiardo et altre cose diverse*. The volume was reprinted five more times in the years up to 1537 and again in 1808.

were actually printed, with a tercet on each, as Boiardo had intended; two or three incomplete examples are known.<sup>6</sup> Boiardo's verses were reprinted, under the title 'I Tarocchi', in Angelo Solerti's collected edition of his poetry, together with a hitherto unpublished commentary by Pier Antonio Viti da Urbino (1470-1500), and again in the collected edition by A. Zottoli.<sup>7</sup> Viti's commentary is addressed to a lady at the court of Urbino,<sup>8</sup> and describes the symbolism of the cards and how to play with them; he, like Boiardo, uses the word *trionfi*, not *tarocchi*, for the trumps and sometimes for the whole pack. But, although he confirms the necessity of following suit and of playing a trump when unable to follow, and the different orders of the numeral cards in different pairs of suits, he merely remarks that one may use the pack to play all the ordinary games, and describes a special game in which the tercets are read out at various stages. He gives no help about how ordinary Tarot games were played.

In 1550 the Ferrarese poet Flavio Alberto Lollo (1508?-1568) published his mock-diatribes in verse against the game of Tarot, entitled *Invettiva di M. Alberto Lollo academico philareto contra il giuoco del Tarocco*;<sup>9</sup> a friend of his, Vincenzo Imperiali, wrote a reply, *Risposta di M. Vincenzo Imperiali all'Invettiva di M. Alberto Lollo contra il giuoco del Tarocco*, which remains in

<sup>6</sup> One was mentioned by Carlo Lozzi, 'Le Antiche Carte da Giuoco', *La Bibliofilia*, Vol. I, 1900, pp. 37-46 and 181-6, and another by Romain Merlin, *L'Origine des Cartes à Jouer*, Paris, 1869, pp. 94-6 and plate 28. This latter may be identical with that sold at auction in London in 1971. See M. Dummett, 'Notes on a fifteenth-century pack of cards from Italy', *Journal of the Playing-Card Society*, Vol. I, no. 3, 1973, pp. 1-6.

<sup>7</sup> A. Solerti, *Le Poesi Volgari e Latine di M. M. Boiardo*, Bologna, 1894, pp. 313-38; A. Zottoli, *Tutte le opere di Matteo Maria Boiardo*, Milan, 1936-7, vol. 2, pp. 702-16.

<sup>8</sup> In his 'Tarocchi di M. M. Boiardo', in N. Campanini (ed.) *Studi su Matteo Maria Boiardo*, Bologna, 1894, Rodolfo Renier suggests that this was the lady Emilia Pia, famous from Castiglione's *The Courtier* and friend of Elisabetta Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino and sister of Francesco Gonzaga, the Marquis of Mantua and husband of Isabella d'Este.

<sup>9</sup> Published separately as *Invettiva di Flavio Alberto Lollo contra il giuoco del tarocco*, Venice, 1550, and simultaneously in *Rime piacevoli*, Venice, 1550, pp. 272-82. Republished in Ferrara in 1590. See the catalogue *I Tarocchi*, ed. G. Berti and A. Vitali of the exhibition 'Le Carte di Corte: Gioco e Magia alla Corte degli Estensi' held in Ferrara in 1987-8, no. 44 and p. 113.

manuscript.<sup>10</sup> Since Lollo, in particular, at one point in his poem describes the feelings of a player in the course of a game, one might expect to glean much from these works about the rules of play in Ferrara; but it is difficult to do so, because neither writer explains the game, but takes for granted that his reader will know how it is played. Imperiali confirms that, in the Ferrarese order, the highest trump is the Mondo (World), followed by Justice and the Angel, in that order, saying:

Il primo è il Mondo, che di se il gouerno  
Ha dato alla Giustizia: e incontinente  
L'Angel del Ciel la segue, e state, e  
uerno.

The first is the World, which has given its government to Justice, followed unswevingly by the Angel of Heaven in summer and winter.

He also informs us of other versions of the game, with special names ("alla Thoscana" and "alla Villotta"), already in existence at that date.

Spesso u'odo cantar gli alti trofei  
Del Giuoco alla Thoscana, e alla  
Villotta,  
Come gran beneficio delli Dei.

Often do I hear sung the high trophies of the game *alla Toscana* and *alla Villotta*, as a great blessing of the gods.

The relevant part of Lollo's poem, as given in the manuscript (presumably the most trustworthy source) is as follows:

Ecco che s'incomincia a dar le carte:  
La prima man ti fà una bella uista,  
Tal, che tu tien l'inuito, et lo rifai:  
Quelle che uengon dietro, altra facenda  
Mostrano hauer; nè più de' casi tuoi

See, the cards are beginning to be dealt. The first hand looks good to you, so that you hold the invitation, and make it again. Those that come next show a different state of affairs:

<sup>10</sup> A manuscript in the Biblioteca Ariosteia, Ferrara, ms. 257, cc. 30, apparently in Lollo's handwriting, contains Lollo's *Invettiva* followed by Imperiali's *Risposta*. See *I Tarocchi*, no. 45 and p. 113.

Tengono alcuna cura: onde tu stai  
 Sospeso alquanto: et di uada:  
 quell'altro

Ilqual par che il fauor lor si prometta,  
 Ingrosserà la posta: allhor trafitto .  
 Da vergogna, dolor, d'inuidia, e d'ira,  
 Ten uai à monte, co'l viso abbassato.

Non hà si gran cordoglio un Capitano,  
 Quando si crede hauer la pugna uinta,  
 E mentre ei grida uittoria, uittoria,  
 Da nuouo assalto sopraggiunto, uede  
 Andar la gente sua rotta e dispersa:  
 Quanto hà costui. Uengon dapoi  
 quell'altre

Due man di Carte, hor liete, hor triste: et  
 quando

Hauendola inuitata già del resto,  
 L'ultime aspetti che ti dian soccorso,  
 Ti ti uedi arriuare (oh dolor grande)  
 Carte gaglioffe da farti morire,  
 Totalmente contrarie al tuo bisogno:  
 Onde di stizza auampi, et tutto pieno  
 Di mal talento, rimbrottando pigli  
 L'auanzo delle Carte, che son uenti.

they no longer have your chances in mind. You therefore remain in suspense; and it goes on. The other man, who seems to expect their favour, will increase the stake; then, wounded by shame, pain, envy and anger, you go *a monte*, with face downcast.

A Captain who thinks he has won the battle, and, while he cries, "Victory! Victory!", sees his people crushed or dispersed by an unexpected new attack, does not feel anguish so great as this man.

There then come two other hands of cards, first fortunate, then miserable: and when you are expecting the last ones to give you some help, having invited them from the remainder, you see arrive (oh, bitter pain) hideous cards to make you die, quite the opposite of what you need. You are therefore inflamed with vexation, and, full of ill will, you begin scolding the remainder of your cards, which are twenty.

The game Lollo is describing is plainly for three players. Each receives 25 cards from the dealer, in five rounds of five each; presumably the dealer takes the three cards left over at the end of the deal, and discards three, although this is not stated.<sup>11</sup> A draw and discard is the practice in almost every Tarot game. It may possibly not have been a feature of the game as played when first invented. A game known as Scartino was highly popular in Italian court circles in the 1490s, particularly in Ferrara; we do not know how it was played, but it is likely to have taken its name from the practice of drawing and discarding, which may have been novel with it and the source of the same practice in Tarot games.<sup>12</sup> Even if so, the practice must have been well established in Tarot by 1550: one reference to Scartino is dated to 1509, and another to 1517; all the many others are from the 1490s.

As described by Lollo, there is, after each round of the deal except the last, a pause during which the stake each player has to put up is either accepted at its existing level or increased by the proposal of any one of the players.<sup>13</sup> During any of these pauses, any player may propose going *a monte*, that is, throwing in the hands for a new deal; this will be done, to judge from many other sources, only if it is agreed by all the players. Before play begins, we learn from Imperiali that payments are made for three holdings players have in their hands.

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<sup>11</sup> It is just possible that the dealer discards eight cards, and the other two five each: but this seems unlikely.

<sup>12</sup> Scartino was played by Alfonso I, Ercole I, Beatrice, Isabella and Ippolito d'Este and by Lodovico il Moro; it may have been a three-handed game. For references, see the *Diario ferrarese* of 1499 in Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. 24, p. 376; F. Malaguzzi-Valeri, *La corte di Lodovico il Moro*, vol. 1, Milan, 1913, p. 575; A. Venturi, 'Relazioni artistiche tra le corti di Milano e Ferrara nel secolo XV', *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, anno XII, 1885, p. 254; A. Luzio and R. Renier, *Mantova e Urbino*, Turin and Rome, 1893, pp. 63-5, and 'Delle relazioni di Isabella d'Este Gonzaga con Lodovico e Beatrice Sforza', *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, anno XVII, 1890, pp. 368 and 379-80; A. Luzio, *I precettori d'Isabella d'Este*, Ancona, 1887, p. 22; and G. Bertoni, *Poesie, leggende, costumanze del medio evo*, Modena, 1917, p. 219.

<sup>13</sup> From Lollo's text one would assume the stake to be for winning the hand; but Imperiali makes clear that it is for the *ronfa* alone (see below).

Unfortunately, it is not easy to decide exactly what these are. The relevant lines of Imperiali's *Risposta* run as follows:

Lo inuito in dar le Carte fà il prim'att  
 C'hà maggior Ronfa, coi trionfi  
 insieme,  
 Riman uincente dell'inuito fatto.

Chi perde il primo, nel secondo hà  
 speme,  
 D'hauer suoi danni alquanto ristorati,  
 Ma spesso auien che questo anchor lo  
 preme.

Et questi son gli honori accoppiati,  
 A' quai si rende una certa honoranza,  
 Secondo i patti da prima fermati.

Il terzo segue, secondo l'usanza  
 Il ualor de' Tarocchi, et le figure  
 Chi riman con più punti, tanto auanza.

The invitation during the deal of the cards makes the first action: he who has the greatest Ronfa, together with the trumps, remains the winner of the invitation that was made.

He who loses this first action, has hope of having his losses somewhat restored in the second. But it often happens that this again crushes him:

these are the combined honours, to which are allotted a certain award, according to the agreements concluded at the beginning.

The third action follows, according to custom - the value of the Tarocchi and the court cards; he who remains with the most points gains by so much.

The first holding, also referred to by Lollo, is the *ronfa*; its value is whatever was eventually decided as the stake in the pause after the fourth round of the deal. This is the only known use of the term *ronfa* in a Tarot game. It (or its cognates in other languages, such as French *ronfle* and, formerly, English *ruff*) normally refers to having the greatest number of cards in any one suit, as in Piquet, where it was later supplanted by the word *point*. Lollo speaks of having a *ronfa* of four or five cards; but Imperiali uses the phrase "the greatest *ronfa*, together with the



trumps". It is obscure what part the trumps play in determining the winner of the *ronfa*. But even a holding of five cards in some suit, let alone four, could hardly represent the longest holding even in that suit: there would be nine other cards in the suit to be divided between the other two players. Since the player in Lollo's poem goes on to express a fear that he will lose "the King, with the court cards", it seems likely that the *ronfa*, in this game, was won by the player with the highest total point-value in any one suit. The second type of holding is called by Imperiali the "combined honours": perhaps the 'honours' were the Kings and trumps of the same point-value as the Kings (presumably the World, the Bagatto and the Fool), and this was a score for having the greatest number of these. According to Imperiali, it had to be agreed at the outset what this score should be. Finally, Imperiali states, there was a score for points on "the Tarocchi and the court cards". Since the ordinary word for 'trumps' seems to have been *trionfi*, it is possible that the word *tarocchi* has the same meaning as it does in the Bolognese game, namely as applying to trumps (and the Fool) with a high point-value: in other words, this last score was for having the highest total of points on counting cards in the hand. All we can really tell is that, before play began, players could obtain various scores for cards held in hand.

Lollo has the King of the suit in his *ronfa*, and is anxious lest it should 'die'; from the use of this term in other games, this means its being captured by a trump. His poem continues as follows from the passage quoted above:

Queste t'empion le mani, et buona prezza  
 Ti dan briga e trauaglio, in rassetare.  
 Dinar; Coppe; Baston; Spade; e Trionfi.  
 Però ti conuiene ad una, ad una,  
 Metterle in ordinanza; et far di loro,  
 Come farebbe un boun pastor, che  
 hauesse

These fill your hands, and for a  
 long time they give you trouble and  
 worry to arrange Coins, Cups,  
 Batons, Swords and trumps,  
 because it is useful to put them in  
 order one by one; to do with them  
 as a good shepherd would do, if he

Di molti armenti, apparecchiando mandre  
 Diuerse per ciascun. Quindi, s'hai  
 quattro  
 O cinque Carte di Ronfa; tu temi  
 Che non ti muoia il Re, con le figure;  
 Onde la mente di spasmo si strugge,  
 Stando in bilancia fra'l dubbio e la  
 speme.

had many flocks, preparing  
 different folds for each. Then, if  
 you have four or five *carte di ronfa*,  
 you fear that the King will die, with  
 the court cards; therefore your mind  
 is wracked, standing in balance  
 between doubt and hope.

The likelihood is that there is a penalty in this version of Tarot for losing a King in play. Lollo says, later in the poem, that, even if you have a good hand, you may play it so badly that you lose one or two *dozzine* (dozens), or even all of them; this obviously refers to some feature of the scoring. He then raises a considerable puzzle by asking, "How many times are you unable to cover the Matto (Fool)?", and commenting that, as a result, you unwillingly find yourself robbed of all the good you have gained.

Et s'egli auien talhor, c'habbi un bel  
 giuoco,  
 T'andrà si mal giocato, che ne perdi  
 Una dozzina, ò due; talhora tutti.  
 Quante uolte non puoi coprire il Matto,  
 Tal, che mal grado tuo spogliar ti uedi  
 Del buon c'haueui; et Cornacchia  
 Che restò spennacchiata infra gli  
 ucelli?

And if it sometimes happens that you  
 have a good hand, you will play it so  
 badly that you lose one *dozzina*, or  
 two; sometimes everything.  
 How many times are you unable to  
 cover the Matto, so that, against your  
 will, you see yourself despoiled of the  
 good that you had, and are the crow,  
 who remained featherless among the  
 birds.

What is it to 'cover' the Matto? The expression "*coprire il Matto*" is used by Bolognese players for the procedure whereby, in playing the Matto, one merely

shows it to the other players and then places it face down on the pile of cards one has won in tricks, without playing it to the table, and that is presumably what Lollo means by it. When the Matto serves as Excuse, it can only in rare cases be lost; why, then, is Lollo's player so often unable to use it, or, perhaps, to retain it? It looks as though in the game played by Lollo, either it could be captured or there were restrictions on when it could be played, or both. The only such restrictions known from other Tarot games are rules that it is lost if played in the last trick, or in any of the last three, or five, tricks; but this does not seem to fit the context. Possibly, in the game played at Ferrara, the Matto could be captured by a trump played later to the trick. And possibly it could be played only when the player was unable to follow suit. Why, moreover, should a failure to save the Matto be so particularly calamitous? A possibility is that there were scores at the end of the hand for special combinations of cards won in tricks, and that the Matto could, as in the Bolognese game, be used as a substitute for missing cards in such combinations, or added to them to increase their value. Undoubtedly, Lollo's question raises a puzzle not easily resolved.

We have not been able to infer a great deal about the rules of play from these two poems. The game was a three-handed one. There was betting after each of the first four rounds of the deal. Declarations were made before play began. The role of the Fool in play is uncertain. There may have been scores for special combinations of cards won in tricks. Beyond this we can find no certainty.

## CHAPTER 11

### Bolognese Tarocchino

The Ferrarese tradition of Tarot play had died out soon after the end of the XVI century. The Bolognese tradition offers a great contrast. The game certainly goes back in Bologna to the XV century, and it is still enthusiastically played in that city and in many outlying towns today. A vigorous Accademia del Tarocchino Bolognese now exists in the city to encourage the playing of the game, to teach it to novices and to hold tournaments. There is every indication that Bolognese players are extremely conservative: neither the rules of the game nor the design of the standard pattern peculiar to Bologna can have altered greatly over the centuries. The earliest documentary reference is from 1459, when a Tarot pack was among the goods stolen in a burglary.<sup>1</sup> In 1477 one Pietro Bonozzi is recorded as making both ordinary cards and Tarot cards.<sup>2</sup> The earliest surviving Bolognese cards are to be seen on two incomplete sheets of six unnumbered trump cards each, plainly fragments of the same original sheet; one is in the Rothschild Collection in the Louvre, and the other at the Bibliothèque de l'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Paris. Together they show the Wheel (*Roda*), the Chariot (*Carro*), the Old Man (*Vecchio*, corresponding to the Hermit), the Traitor (*Traditore*, another name for the Hanged Man), Death (*Morte*), the Devil (*Diavolo*), the Thunderbolt (*Saetta*, corresponding to the Tower), the Star (*Stella*), the Moon (*Luna*), the Sun (*Sole*), the World (*Mondo*) and the Angel

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<sup>1</sup> *unum par cartarum a triumphis*. See Emilio Orioli, 'Sulle carte da giuoco a Bologna nel secolo XV', *Il libro e la stampa*, anno II (n.s.), 1908, pp. 109-19; see p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> *le carte e triumphis da zugare*. Ibid., pp. 113 and 117-19.

(*Angelo*). They evidently date from the XV century. With one exception, the Devil, their designs closely resemble those of later cards; one can see the resemblance even to modern double-headed cards. The design of the Devil is, however, quite different from that used from the XVII century onwards. In 1588 an Achille Pinamonti was granted by the Pope the right to collect the tax on playing cards: 5 *soldi* for a *Primiera* pack, which would have had 40 cards, and 10 *soldi* for a pack of *tarocchini*, which had 62.<sup>3</sup> A single unnumbered trump card by Agnolo Hebreo, probably from the XVI century, now in the British Museum, depicts the Devil. Its design resembles that of the corresponding card on the sheet in the Rothschild Collection, and it is therefore almost certainly from Bologna; but, were it not for the Rothschild sheet, we should have no reason to associate it with that city. It must have been during the course of the XVI century that the standard Bolognese design of the Devil was completely altered.

As elsewhere, the standard pattern for the regular Bolognese pack coincided with the designs of the suit cards of the Tarot pack. The regular Bolognese pack was a 40-card one known as early as 1588, to judge from the concession to Achille Pinamonti mentioned above, as the *Primiera bolognese*, after the popular gambling game of *Primiera*. It continues to be produced to this day, although it is no longer in use in the city of Bologna itself, but only in some surrounding towns. From perhaps no earlier than about 1690 until not much later than 1730 the lowest court figures in the suits of Cups and Coins, both in the *Primiera bolognese* and the *Tarocco bolognese*, were female – *Fantesche* rather than *Fanti*; but this detail has not persisted.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to Tarot packs

<sup>3</sup> See Lodovico Frati, *La Vita privata di Bologna dal secolo XIII al secolo XVII*, Bologna, 1890, p. 133. From the use of the word *tarocchini* in the manuscript from which Frati was quoting, it follows that the reduced pack was already in common use at this date.

<sup>4</sup> The *Fantesche* do not figure in Giuseppe Maria Mitelli's famous Bolognese Tarot pack of 1664, although this evidence is not strong, since it was highly non-standard. They are not referred to in the earliest published accounts of the game, in 1753 and 1754. They do figure in a late XVII-century pack in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and in a single-ended pack in the British Museum made after 1725 (O'Donoghue's catalogue, I-37) and in a similar one in the collection of Dott. Crippa of Milan.

everywhere else, in which the trumps bore numerals from the XVI century onwards, numerals were not added to any of the Bolognese trump cards until the second half of the XVIII century: the earliest accounts of the game that we have, from 1753 and 1754, make plain that at that time the trumps were still unnumbered, and that it was necessary for a beginner to commit their order to memory – not so difficult to do as one might imagine. Even when Arabic numerals were added, they were not attached to the highest or to the lowest trumps. In the second half of the XVIII century, a little later than the addition of numerals to some of the trumps, the Tarocco bolognese became one of the first types of playing-card pack to assume a double-headed form, not unnaturally because of the large number of picture cards in a Tarot pack. It did this between 1760 and 1780; but the continuity of the designs from the earliest surviving Bolognese Tarot cards – those on the two sheets in Paris – is still recognisable. The order of the trumps in the Tarocco bolognese was quite different from that of Ferrara or that of Milan. It was differentiated from the trump orders observed in those two cities in three ways. The least important of these is that the three cardinal virtues of Temperance, Justice and Fortitude are grouped together, instead of being scattered through the sequence. Much more importantly, the highest trump is the Angel; the World occupies a subordinate place immediately below it. The most idiosyncratic feature is that the four Papal and Imperial cards – the Pope, Popess, Emperor and Empress – were never named individually but were known collectively as *Papi* (Popes) and treated as being of equal rank: if two or more of these cards were played to the same trick, that last played beat the others. We already became familiar with both the last two features in Chapter 8, where their presence in games played in Piedmont and Savoy prompted the conjecture that the game of Tarot was brought to Piedmont from Bologna. The four *Papi* are no longer present in the Bolognese Tarot pack, having been replaced in 1725 by four Moors (*Mori*), for reasons to be explained below: but the Moors have inherited the same function in play – they rank as equal, that played

later beating any played earlier. The names of the trumps, as they were originally, usually given without the article in Bolognese texts, together with the numerals subsequently added to some of them, and their order, are as follows:

- Angelo* (Angel)
- Mondo* (World)
- Sole* (Sun)
- Luna* (Moon)
- 16 *Stella* (Star)
- 15 *Saetta* (Thunderbolt, corresponding to the Tower)
- 14 *Diavolo* (Devil)
- 13 *Morte* (Death)
- 12 *Traditore* (Traitor, corresponding to the Hanged Man)
- 11 *Vecchio* (Old Man, corresponding to the Hermit)
- 10 *Roda* or *Ruota* (Wheel)
- 9 *Forza* (Strength)
- 8 *Giusta* or *Giustizia* (Justice)
- 7 *Tempra* or *Temperanza* (Temperance)
- 6 *Carro* (Chariot)
- 5 *Amore* (Love)
- the four *Papi*
- Bagattino*

The first form of the name of each of the trumps 10, 8 and 7 is Bolognese; the second form standard Italian. The form *Ruota* occurs in some early sources; *Giustizia* and *Temperanza* not before the XIX century. The lowest trump, corresponding to the *Bagatto* of other Tarot packs, was originally called *Bagattino*, but is nowadays called *il Begato*, with the stress on the first syllable, except in Castel Bolognese, where the older name *Bagattino* is still employed. In that city a trump is called *flèc*, a Romagnole dialect equivalent of *flicco*. In Bologna, Porretta Terme and elsewhere, the Moors are nowadays usually called *Moretti*, but in Castel Bolognese the older term *Mori* is still used, as it is by some in Bologna itself. The Fool is called the *Matto*; before any of the trumps were numbered, they were generically called *trionfi*, but nowadays almost everyone

calls them simply *numeri* (despite the fact that several are not numbered).<sup>5</sup> Note that, if the numbering were carried on to the top, the highest trump, the Angel, would only receive the number 20: the *Bagattino* or *Begato* is to be considered as not having a number.<sup>6</sup> Nowadays Tarot cards are usually known in Bologna as *carte lunghe* (long cards). Empty cards (cards with no special point-value) are called *scartini*; counting cards are called *carte di pregio*. The Sun and Moon trumps are called *rosse* (red [cards]). The suit of Coins is more often known as *Danari* than as *Denari*.

In many sources the Bolognese game is referred to in the diminutive form *Tarocchino*. In the XX century the name had been dying out, and the game referred to, like other Italian Tarot games, simply as *Tarocchi*; but the recently founded Accademia has revived the name *Tarocchino*. The reason for the diminutive form is that the Bolognese Tarot pack is a shortened one: it has only 62 cards, the numeral cards from 2 to 5 being omitted from each of the four suits. The suit cards nevertheless rank in their original order: in Swords and Batons, in the descending order K, Q, C, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, A, and in Cups and Coins in the order K, Q, C, J, A, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. It is highly probable that the game was originally played with the full pack of 78 cards, as everywhere else. At some stage the existing game of Tarot played in Bologna was adapted to the shortened form of the Tarot pack; this probably occurred in the XVI century, when the practice of shortening the regular pack, as in the 36-card pack used for Trappola

<sup>5</sup> Players in Medicina use for the trumps collectively the antiquated term *flicchi*.

<sup>6</sup> This may possibly derive from a method described by Pisarri (pp. 40-1) for computing the value of a *grande* (sequence of trumps) from the trumps held at the end of the hand by the *opponents* of the side that has the Angelo. Although at the time Pisarri was writing the trumps did not yet bear numerals, he assigns to them for this purpose precisely the numbers that were later shown when numerals were added. His recipe depends on finding the critical trump whose absence interrupts the *grande* (Pisarri calls this *l'ultimo Trionfo, che scavezza*). Beginning with the number assigned to this trump, one adds the number of higher trumps held by the side that does not have the Angelo, together with the number of *contatori* held by them, multiplies by 5, and subtracts the result from 105. For example if one side has World, 14, 12, 10, 9, 7, 5, Begato, the critical trump is the 12 (since the Matto can be substituted for the 14) and there are three trumps to add (World, 14, Begato), so the value of the *grande* held by the other side is  $105 - (12 + 3) \times 5 = 30$



and the 40-card pack used for *Primiera*, had become prevalent.<sup>7</sup> Both forms of Tarot game, that with the full pack and that with the shortened pack, would then have existed side by side for a time, the latter being called *Tarocchino* to distinguish it from the older form with the full pack. Just this happened independently in Sicily, where a shortened pack with 63 cards was introduced and was known at first as *tarocchini*. Both in Bologna and in Sicily the shortened packs proved more popular than the older 78-card packs, which then died out, although only in Bologna did the term *Tarocchino* persist long after the disappearance of the 78-card form. By the XVII century the older form must have been long forgotten: Mitelli's non-standard pack of 1664 was of the shortened form, and a celebrated XVII-century portrait of Prince Castracani Fibbia, stated to have died in 1419, ascribes to him (quite falsely) the invention of the game of *Tarocchino*; evidently the parent game of *Tarocchi* had by then been quite forgotten. If it was in the XVI century that the Bolognese Tarot pack was first shortened, the full 78-card pack probably fell into disuse in Bologna well before that century ended.

The replacement of the *Papi* by *Mori* came about in 1725 by the intervention of the Papal Legate, Cardinal Ruffo. At that time, Bologna, although very proud of its ancient liberties, fell within the Papal States, but, by an agreement of 1447, enjoyed considerable autonomy. In 1725 Canon Luigi Montieri of Bologna produced a geographical *Tarocchino* pack: the body of each trump card gave geographical information, while the suit cards showed the coats of arms of the *anziani* and *gonfalonieri* (aldermen and standard-bearers) of Bologna from 1670 onwards. At the top of each card a small panel showed the denomination of the card (Montieri substituted the 2-6 of each suit for the 6-10). What annoyed the Legate, Cardinal Ruffo, was that on the *Matto* Bologna was described as having a 'mixed government' (*governo misto*). Ruffo ordered

<sup>7</sup> The shortened pack was established by 1588; see footnote 3.

Montieri's pack publicly burned; Montieri and everyone concerned with its production were arrested. However, the Legate quickly came to realise that to proceed against them on this ground would arouse deep resentment in the city. He therefore had the prisoners rapidly released, and, to save face, demanded instead that the four *Papi* be replaced by four Moorish satraps, and the Angel by a Lady (*Dama*). The first change was accepted, though the second was ignored, and Montieri's pack was reissued with Moors instead of *Papi*; moreover, Moors were henceforth used in all Bolognese Tarot packs. In the earliest examples, the Moors have clearly been adapted from the previous Pope, Emperor, etc., the identifying features of the latter removed and the faces coloured dark. But in subsequent versions, the Moors are undifferentiated from one another (usually, two are the same as each other and the other two different from them and from each other). We have no example of trumps 2 to 4 and only one version of trump 5 – that otherwise depicting the Pope – from the standard pattern used in XVII-century Rome. That shows a Sultan; it is therefore possible that, in the Roman pattern, trumps 2-5 all showed Oriental figures. If so, that may have prompted the Legate's suggestion.

All Bolognese Tarot games of which we have knowledge are played with the shortened pack of 62 cards. They all share basic rules, which include, as a distinctive feature, scores for a large number of special combinations of cards.

#### *Basic rules of Bolognese Tarot games*

Deal and play are counter-clockwise. It is necessary to follow suit if possible and, when not, to play a trump if possible. The Fool serves as Excuse, being simply shown to the other players and then placed face down on the pile of cards won in tricks; this is called *coprire il Matto* (covering the Fool). If the trick to which it was played was won by an opponent, another card is exchanged for it at the end of the hand. The Fool is surrendered to the opponent or opponents if, and only if, the side that played it wins no tricks. The trumps rank, in descending order, as in the table above: the *Papi* or Moors have equal rank, whichever of them is played

last to a trick beating any played earlier; any of them can beat the Bagattino or Begato, which is the lowest trump. The suit cards rank as in the order stated above. The points on the cards are as follows:

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| <i>Angelo</i> (Angel)             | 5 points |
| <i>Mondo</i> (World)              | 5 points |
| <i>Bagattino</i> or <i>Begato</i> | 5 points |
| <i>Matto</i> (Fool)               | 5 points |
| Each King                         | 5 points |
| Each Queen                        | 4 points |
| Each Cavallo                      | 3 points |
| Each <i>Fante</i> (Jack)          | 2 points |

There are 6 points for winning the last trick. The Angel, World, Bagattino (Begato) and Fool are called collectively *tarocchi*; they and the Kings are together *carte da cinque*.

#### *Variant*

In some towns outside Bologna, such as Loiano, Marzabotto, Monterenzio and Sasso Marconi – but not in Porretta Terme or Monzuno – the practice has developed of inscribing the numerals 1, 2, 3 and 4 on the Moors, so as to impose a fixed sequence on them (higher-numbered Moors of course beating lower-numbered ones). This practice, disapproved of in Bologna and contrary to ancient Bolognese tradition, is a fairly recent development. The antiquity of the traditional rule is demonstrated by its adoption in Piedmont.

#### *Special combinations of cards*

Special combinations of cards play a salient role in Bolognese Tarot games. They are of two types, *cricche* (sets of three or four of a kind, formerly called *pariglie*) and *sequenze* (sequences). The possible *cricche*, with their values, are:

|                            |           |                           |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Three <i>Tarocchi</i>      | 18 points | Four <i>Tarocchi</i>      | 36 points |
| Three Kings                | 17 points | Four Kings                | 34 points |
| Three Queens               | 14 points | Four Queens               | 28 points |
| Three Cavalli              | 13 points | Four Cavalli              | 26 points |
| Three <i>Fanti</i> (Jacks) | 12 points | Four <i>Fanti</i> (Jacks) | 24 points |

Three or more *cricche* form a *criccone*, and all the points for the *cricche* are then doubled.

There are seven different kinds of sequence, one in each of the four suits, one in trumps, called a *grande*, and two that are really sets of three or four of a kind, but rank as sequences, not as *cricche*. Sequences in suits and trumps run from the top downwards. A sequence in a suit must contain the King and any two, or all three, of the other court cards; to these the Ace may be added, but not any of the other cards of the suit. A *grande* (sequence in trumps) must contain the Angel, and any two of the three following trumps (World, Sun and Moon); to these may be added any further trumps in unbroken sequence from the 16 (Star) downwards. The two remaining sequences (so called) consist of any three, or all four, Aces, and any three, or all four, *Papi* or Moors. The same card may be used in more than one sequence, e.g. the Ace of Batons in a sequence in Batons and in a sequence of Aces, and in a sequence and a *cricca*, e.g. the Angel or the World in a *cricca* of *tarocchi* and in a *grande*. In sequences, the Fool and the Bagattino or Begato have a special role: they are together called *contatori*. They may, with restrictions, serve to substitute for missing cards. They may not substitute for the Angel or for a King, and they may not effect successive substitutions; but each may substitute for some one missing card. Thus the Angel, the World, a *contatore*, the 16 (Star), another *contatore*, and the 14 (the Devil) make up a *grande* of six cards: the first *contatore* substitutes for the Sun or the Moon and the second for trump 15 (the Thunderbolt). The Angel, the World, one *contatore* and the 16 will make up a *grande* of four cards, and the Angel, the World and a *contatore* one of three: but the Angel, the World, two *contatori* and the 15 do not constitute a *grande* of five cards, with one *contatore* substituting for the Sun and the other for the 16, because, although the Sun and the 16 are not contiguous trumps, the two *contatori* are contiguous in the putative *grande*. The Angel, a *contatore*, the Sun, another *contatore* and the 15 do, however, constitute a *grande* of five cards. A sequence of Aces must contain at least two genuine Aces, and a

sequence of *Papi* or Moors at least two genuine *Papi* or Moors. In addition to their role in substituting for missing cards, one or both *contatori* not needed as substitutes may be added to any sequence; and the same *contatore* may be used in different sequences (and in a *cricca* of *tarocchi*). Each sequence counts 10 points for the first three cards, plus 5 points for each card (including *contatori*) beyond three: thus a sequence of five cards counts 20 points. For three or more sequences, all the points are doubled.

The *cricche* and sequences are scored for, not only when held in the hand as originally dealt, but also when included among the tricks won in play. It is therefore unsurprising that they tend to overwhelm the ordinary points on cards won in tricks, which are nevertheless never ignored.

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The earliest published description of Bolognese Tarot occurs in the card-game book *Il Giuoco pratico* (GP) by Rafael Bisteghi, the first edition of which was published anonymously in Bologna in 1753. A far fuller description was given in a detailed book, *Istruzioni necessarie per che si volesse imparare il dilettevole giuoco di Tarocchino* (IN). This appeared in 1754; the first edition was again anonymous, but a second edition came out in the same year with the slightly amended title *Istruzioni necessarie per chi volesse imparare il giuoco dilettevole delli Tarocchini di Bologna*. The book is generally ascribed to Ferdinando Carlo Pisarri, but he may have been only the editor. IN describes several different games, the principal one of which is called Partita. The author tells us that he had seen a 'very old' manuscript describing the method of play in former times, and intersperses his description of the contemporary game with indications of the different rules in the manuscript. Great credit is due to Dr. Lorenzo Cuppi for identifying a copy of this manuscript. In the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio he discovered a manuscript in the Gozzadini collection; the discovery is a most important contribution to the history of the Bolognese form of Tarot. The Gozzadini collection was made in Bologna during

the period of Napoleonic domination, and consists of material from the libraries of the various religious orders; it includes twelve volumes of manuscripts edited by the Prior, Father Carlo Vincenzo Maria Pedini, in about 1769. The first of these volumes contains a manuscript entitled '*Spiegazione del Giuoco del Tarochino*' ('Explanation of the Game of Tarocchino'). Dr. Cuppi has given convincing arguments for dating the composition of this manuscript to 1746.<sup>8</sup> The manuscript is in three parts. The first part, headed '*Del Giuoco del Tarochino*' ('On the Game of Tarocchino') (GT), begins with the following introductory remark by Pedini:

Courteous reader, here is the manner in which our forefathers played at Tarocchino; they found it would pass idle hours in a virtuous way. I found it not long ago among various ancient writings and hence I communicate it to you so that you may be provided with the best teacher, and I shall be consoled by seeing the game played properly. Enjoy yourself.<sup>9</sup>

This makes it plain that Pedini was copying a much older text. The rest of the first part consists of twenty sections setting out the rules of the game, together with some advice about strategy. The second part of the manuscript is composed of twenty-five sections laying down penalties, and the third part is by Pedini himself and reports certain updatings of the regulations of the 'forefathers'. We are most grateful to Dr. Cuppi for sending us a photocopy and a transcript of the

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<sup>8</sup> The first volume is in three parts, with separate pagination; the manuscript on Tarocchino is in the first part. This first part contains also a list of those buried in the Capuchin cemetery, the latest of whom died in January 1746. It also contains a list of benefices created in Bologna on 17th August 1746 by Benedict XIV. Although the eleven later volumes were compiled after 1755, this makes it probable that the first part of Volume I was compiled in 1746.

<sup>9</sup> Lettor cortese, eccoui il modo, col quale giocauano à Tarochino li nostri Maggiori che per passare l'hore oziose uirtuosamente l'inuentarono. Lo trouai non è molto trà diuerse scritte antiche, e però ue lo comunico acciò siate prouisto d'ottimo maestro, ed io consolato in ueder giocare, come si deue. Siate allegro.

first part of the manuscript and a copy of an article by him setting out his conclusions concerning his discoveries.<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Cuppi observes that the first part (GT) refers only to *Papi*, never to *Mori*; this makes it certain that the original dates from before 1725. Furthermore, as he remarks, the game is to be played in silence, the only expression officially allowed to be used being the command "*Sminchiate*". This is in complete contrast with the later form of the game, as described in IN, in which, as we shall see, a very large number of expressions with conventional meanings may be used by players to inform or advise their partners. The cards are counted in fours; but it is observed that this is done only when there are four players. Presumably, then, other games than Partita were played at the time when GT was written, and the original custom was observed of counting the cards in sets equal in number to the number of players – thus, in effect, scoring 1 point for each trick won.

The second part of the manuscript, concerned with penalties, assumes that the game is played in the form described in IN, and is therefore of a later date than the first part. It coincides very closely with a manuscript in Bologna University Library, and also with a list of penalties in Bisteghi's GP. Pedini states that he copied this list of penalties from a printed sheet, which Dr. Cuppi assumes to have been in circulation in the 1740s. The third part of the manuscript is by Pedini himself; it speaks of *Mori* rather than *Papi*, and indicates the differences in the game as described in the first part of the manuscript and as played at the time the manuscript was composed, namely 1746. This therefore supplies us with an account, independent of that given by IN, of the game played in the mid-XVIII century; we may refer to it as 'Ped'.

Dr. Cuppi has carefully compared GT, the first part of Pedini's manuscript, with the excerpts given in IN from the 'very old' manuscript to which the author refers, and, on the basis of numerous exact verbal coincidences, has

<sup>10</sup> These have now been published in *The Playing Card* in two parts: Vol. 30, 2001, pp. 79-88 and Vol. 30, 2002, pp. 186-92.

concluded that this first part was copied by Pedini from the very manuscript cited by the author of IN. He believes that this manuscript must date from the middle of the XVII century at the latest. He is inclined to believe it even earlier, perhaps from the mid-XVI century at the time when the game with the shortened pack was first invented. We have ourselves no way in which to resolve this uncertainty, but, for caution's sake, shall treat GT, or the manuscript from which it was copied, as testifying to a form of the game dating from the end of the XVI century. It may be that, when first invented, it was less complicated than as described in GT.

### 11.1 Partita (late XVI or early XVII century)

This game was known in the XVIII century as Partita a Pesì, to distinguish it from later forms involving different methods of payment; in the XVII century it was known simply as Partita. A *peso* was a XVII-century monetary unit, presumably a coin, in which payments were made, at the rate of one *peso* for each *partita* (game point). The lowest trump is called the Bagattino and the four trumps immediately above it are called collectively *Papi* and are equal in rank, one played later to a trick beating one played earlier. There are four players in fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table; the 62-card pack is used. The rules of play, the point-values, including 6 points for the last trick, and the combinations of cards – sets and sequences – and their values are all as stated above. The cards are counted in *fours*, two odd empty cards counting nothing: there are thus 71 points on the cards in all, excluding the 6 for the last trick. Trumps are called *trionfi*; the four immediately above the Bagattino rank equal, being called *Papi*, and never named individually, while all other trumps are referred to by name. Numeral cards of the plain suits are called *cartaccie*. The term *cricche* is employed, but that used in preference is *pariglie*; three or more *pariglie* form a *criccone*. A sequence in trumps is called a *granda*. There is no



particular number of hands forming a rubber: players settle up after each hand or after an arbitrary number of hands.

### *Deal*

The dealer gives five cards to each player, and pauses. On the basis of his five cards, the player to the dealer's right may say either *A monte* or *La tengo*.<sup>11</sup> If he says *La tengo*, no other player can speak, but the dealer gives out ten more cards to each player in two rounds of five each, taking the last two for himself and discarding two, which count to him at the end of the hand; he may not discard a card worth 5 points, but may discard any other card. If the player to the dealer's right says *A monte*, it is then the turn of his partner, sitting at the dealer's left, to speak. If he says *La tengo*, the deal is resumed as before. Note that, if either of these two opponents of the dealer's side says *La tengo*, he thereby increases the payment for the game made by each player on the losing side to one of those on the winning side by 5 game points, called *partite*. If the player to the dealer's left says *A monte*, the right to speak passes to the dealer's partner, sitting opposite to him. He, too, may say nothing but either *A monte* or *La tengo*.<sup>12</sup> If he says *La tengo*, however, this is not decisive, but in his mouth serves only as an indication to his partner, the dealer, that he has a good hand; the dealer still has the right to determine whether the game will continue or the hands will be thrown in. The dealer does not need to say anything: he either silently resumes the deal or silently places his five cards face down on the table, in which case the others do the same and there is a new deal by the next dealer. But if the dealer chooses to throw his hand in, he pays a penalty of 5 *partite* for abandoning the game although he had the advantage of the discard.

<sup>11</sup> The procedure of pausing in the course of the deal to decide whether to go *a monte*, i.e. abandon the hand, is met with in many Italian card games. Francesco Berni, in his *Capitolo della Primera* of 1526, mentions it as a feature of the game of Ronfa.

<sup>12</sup> The contrary statement in *The Game of Tarot* is due to Pisarri's failure to describe accurately this phase of the earlier form of the game.

*Play and declarations*

When the dealer has made his discard, he says "Giocate" ("Play"). The player to the dealer's right leads to the first trick. Each player, before he himself plays to the first trick, may declare any *pariglie* (*cricche*) or sequences he has in his hand (together with certain other combinations of cards specified below). A player declaring a combination must display it on the table for all to see. No player is obliged to declare a combination, nor to declare one as strong as he is able to do; the dealer of course may not include in any combination he declares a card he has discarded. *Pariglie* and sequences declared by any player score for his side. The scores in points for each player's declarations are recorded by counters, called *ferlini*, which he places in a special bowl or plate, where they are kept until the end of the hand (broad beans (*fave*) or peas (*lupini*) may be used instead). Each such counter or bean represents ten card points, and at the end of the hand those gained by partners are united. The total of points for each side's *pariglie* and sequences are then rounded up or down to a multiple of 10; 25 is rounded *up* to 30, 15 to 20 and so on. There are two bowls or plates, the one for *ferlini* is held by the currently losing side, and the other, held by the currently winning side, is used for the *pesi*, each representing one *partita*; these are the game points in terms of which settlement is made. *Partite* may be gained in the course of play, as explained below. The first side to gain a *partita* takes possession of the *partite* bowl; the other side uses the *ferlini* bowl to keep track of the score for declarations. (Alternatively each member of the currently losing side keeps a tally of the scores for declarations made by both members, but if, at the end of the hand, their totals do not agree, they are credited with the lower total.) A *partita* is equivalent to 25 card points. Play continues for as many hands as the players choose.

It is essential to make a sharp distinction between card points, including points for *pariglie* and sequences, and the *partite* or game points in terms of which settlement is made at the end of each hand. Some *pariglie* and sequences

are awarded *partite* as well as card points, as explained under *Scoring*; some are awarded only card points. The other combinations which a player may declare before playing to the first trick are awarded only *partite*. These are: 10 or more trumps; 10 or more *cartaccie*; three or four *Papi*; an entire hand containing no trumps. These must be shown to the other players (in the last case the whole hand must be exposed); for declarations of ten or more trumps or of ten or more *cartaccie*, the Matto may be counted as a trump and also as a *cartaccia* (but the Bagattino does not count as a *cartaccia*).

During play, each player keeps the cards he wins in tricks in a single pile in front of him; at the end of the hand, partners unite the piles they have won. Only one word can be uttered during play, namely the word "*Sminchiate*".<sup>13</sup> This is an instruction to lead a high trump given by a player to his partner about to lead to a trick. But three other signals made by gesture without speaking are allowed. The first is *battere*: a player, when playing a card to a trick, may, before releasing the card, strike the table, either in the centre or to the side. If he strikes it in the centre, he indicates to his partner that he holds the highest outstanding card of the suit (or trumps). If he strikes it to the side, he indicates that he holds the second highest. The second permitted signal is *drawing back*: when a player plays a card to a trick, he may, before putting it in the centre of the table, draw it back slightly. He thereby indicates to his partner that he does not wish him to play the highest card of the suit. The final signal is *opening the hand*: by opening his hand in playing a card to the table, a player indicates that he has no more cards in that suit.

<sup>13</sup> In a passage ridiculing the game of Tarocchi in the prose commentary to his *Capitolo della Primiera*, mentioned in footnote 7, the Florentine writer Francesco Berni mentions the word "*Sminchiate*". Berni visited Bologna in 1529, three years after the publication of the *Capitolo*. There is good reason to think that the game of Tarocchi was introduced into Florence, before 1450, from Bologna, in which case it may well have brought the term "*Sminchiate*" with it. According to Dr. Cuppi, it is cognate with a Bolognese dialect verb *smincèr*, meaning 'to hurry'. It certainly did not have, for Bolognesi or for Florentines, the obscene connotation which most Italians would now be disposed to put on it, and which derives from a usage in southern Italy.

*Scoring*

As explained below, there are various ways of gaining *partite* by declarations during the first trick or in the course of play. If *partite* are gained by the side in possession of the *partite* bowl, they put the corresponding number of *pesi* into the bowl. If they are gained by the other side, they remove the corresponding number of *pesi* from the bowl. If the bowl does not contain sufficiently many *pesi*, the empty bowl passes to the possession of the side that has gained *partite*, which adds to it the difference between the number of *pesi* it is due and the number that side has taken from it. At the end of the hand, each side calculates its total of card points. The total consists of the following: the points on cards won in tricks, counted in fours; 6 points for winning the last trick; and the points for *pariglie* and sequences formed from cards won in tricks by the two partners together. The side that has the higher total of card points thus made up has won the hand. To this total it adds 10 points for every counter (*ferlino*) gained by declarations of *pariglie* and sequences made by *either* side at the start of play (rounded up or down as explained above). It then awards itself *partite* for the resulting point-total at the rate of 1 *partita* for every 25 card points. Note that, while the losing side profited by the *partite* it gained for declarations at the start of play, the card points awarded for them go to the winning side.

The winning side is thus rewarded by *partite* (game points) made up in several ways; the losing side gains no *partite*.<sup>14</sup> When it has been determined, after the first hand, which side has won, the winning side takes possession of the *partite* bowl, putting in it the *pesi* representing the difference between the *partite* to which it is entitled and those gained by the losing side. Each side gains as many *partite* as its total of card points divided by 25, the remainder after division being ignored. If the bowl had been in the possession of the losing side, the winners subtract from their total the number of *pesi* previously in the bowl. The

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<sup>14</sup> We here follow the interpretation of Dr Zorli, as set out in his book *Il Tarocchino bolognese* (1992).

bowl then belongs for the time being to the winning side. If the same side wins the next hand, it adds the appropriate number of *partite* to the bowl. If, on the other hand, the opposing side wins, by an amount less than that in the bowl, the side holding the bowl removes as many *partite* as its opponents have won. If the opponents have won more than is in the bowl, they take possession of the bowl and add to it the difference between their score and what was in the bowl. This process continues from hand to hand.

In addition to the score for card points, each side may gain *partite* from the declarations they make during the first trick, both ones that earned them card points and certain ones which did not; they immediately add *pesi* to the bowl if they hold it, or remove them from the bowl if their opponents hold it. These are as follows:

10 *partite* for a declaration of three *Papi*, 20 for a declaration of four;

10 for a declaration of three *tarocchi*, 20 for a declaration of four;

10 for a declaration of three Kings, 20 for a declaration of four;

10 for a declaration by a single player during the first trick of three sequences,  
20 for a declaration of four, 30 for a declaration of five;

10 for declaring a *criccone* of three *pariglie*, 20 for one of four *pariglie*, and 30 for one of five *pariglie*; but some award 20 *partite* for any *criccone*, whether of three, four or five *pariglie*;

10 for a declaration of ten *cartaccie* at the start of play, and doubled for each *cartaccia* above ten (thus 20 for eleven, 40 for twelve, 80 for thirteen, 160 for fourteen and 320 for fifteen);

10 for a declaration of ten trumps, and likewise doubled for each trump above ten;

20 if either partner declared 'no trumps'; but if he was the dealer, he must show his discard at the end of the hand: if he discarded one or two trumps, his side's score is reduced to 10 *partite*.

Additional *partite* are acquired for certain feats in play:

20 for being the first of the two sides to put a *partita* in the bowl;

5 for capturing the Bagattino from the opponents;

5 for capturing the Mondo from the opponents.

Yet further *partite* are gained by winning the game under particular circumstances:

20 for reaching a total of 500 points in a single hand, and 10 more for every 100 points above 500 (30 for 600 points and so on);

10 for winning although the opponents had both contatori;

10 for making 500 points without having the Angelo, 20 for making 600 without the Angelo;<sup>15</sup>

5 if the winning pair were the opponents of the dealer and his partner;

5 if the opponents of the dealer and his partner said *La tengo*, whichever side is the winner;

20 for winning after the partner's invitation to go *a monte* was refused.

If the winning side makes *marcio* (wins all the tricks), all card points are doubled; alternatively, 200 *partite* may be awarded as a flat payment for this rare accomplishment. The playing session continues for as many hands as the players desire. At the end of the session, the side then in possession of the bowl receives from its opponents payment for the *partite* in it, at the rate of one *peso* for each *partita*. Note that the bonus of 20 *partite* for being the first side to put a *partita* on the plate can apply only once in the course of the session, not in each hand, since the side that gains the first *partita* in a hand may *withdraw* one rather than put one in.

### *Variants*

Certain payments are reported differently in IN as observed in the ancient game; Dr. Cuppi is inclined to think that the author of IN was reporting them correctly from the manuscript, and suspects this may be due to

<sup>15</sup> The manuscript has "10" for the second case, but this is presumably an error of copying; Pisarri has "20".

Pedini's having tacitly corrected GT's figures to agree with those agreed in the XVIII century. The schedule in IN is as follows, with the values in the manuscript GT in square brackets:

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| for declaring 5 sequences                    | 40 <i>partite</i> [30] |
| for declaring 3 <i>pariglie</i>              | 20 <i>partite</i> [10] |
| for declaring 4 <i>pariglie</i>              | 40 <i>partite</i> [20] |
| for declaring 5 <i>pariglie</i>              | 80 <i>partite</i> [30] |
| for the first <i>partita</i> in the bowl     | 10 <i>partite</i> [20] |
| for winning without the Angelo               | 20 <i>partite</i> [10] |
| for winning after saying ' <i>La tengo</i> ' | 10 <i>partite</i> [20] |

GT reports that some players – erroneously, according to the author – treat the trumps Love and the Chariot in the same way as the *Papi*; that is to say, they treat these two trumps as of equal rank, so that, if both are played to the same trick, that one played later beats the other.

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This XVII-century game closely resembles the game of Ottocento played today. It differs in one major respect, namely that the cards are counted in fours rather than in twos, as they are today. Counting them in fours must have been the original practice: the custom of counting them in twos must have arisen in the meantime because of the greater popularity at some intervening period of two-handed games. The system of *cricche* and sequences is exactly the same as that followed in the present-day game, and must go back to the original invention of Tarocchino;<sup>16</sup> the principal difference lies in the payments by *partite* not contributing to but superimposed on the card points. In this respect, XVII-century Partita is more complicated than present-day Ottocento; the latter appears complicated enough, but has been simplified from its ancestral form. It seems likely that Tarocchino inherited its leading principles from the game played with

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<sup>16</sup> Dr Cuppi believes that scores for sequences may have been a later addition to scores for *pariglie* or *cricche*, but that they were introduced before the shortening of the pack to 62 cards.

the 78-card pack before its invention (and doubtless for some time afterwards). It is difficult to surmise what these were. One possibility is that, in the 78-card game, a sequence in a suit could contain other numeral cards than just the Ace, just as a *grande* can contain any number of trumps. Thus a sequence in Swords or Batons could consist of the King, two other court cards and numeral cards in succession from the 10 downwards, one in Cups or Coins of the King, two other court cards and numeral cards in succession from the Ace downwards. The fact that a *cricca* of three Kings is worth 17 points, but one of three Queens only 14, is also suggestive. It prompts the speculation that other *cricche*, worth respectively 16 and 15 points, originally intervened. Could these have been sets of three *Papi* and of three Aces, illogically classified in Partita and all later forms as sequences? Possibly: but it would be odd for a set of three Aces to have a higher value than one of three Queens. We have no actual information about how Tarocchi was played in Bologna before the invention of the shortened 62-card pack. We can only conjecture, presuming that it already had many of the features of Tarocchino.

Partita, in its XVIII-century form as described in IN, differed principally from that played in the XVII century by the large number of signals allowed to any player to give information to his partner. These were now all verbal, not by gesture, but only by means of phrases with conventional meanings, oddly called *giuochi* (games). IN rejects many such phrases in common use as excessively informative. The description given in IN is supplemented by the third part (Ped) of Pedini's manuscript.

### 11.2 Partita (mid-XVIII century)

Given the method of scoring described below, the game was known as *Partita a tutto andare*. The principal older form, *Partita a Pesi*, frequently involved very heavy payments. They were not as heavy in *Partita alle Oche*; but the new version made the payments very considerably lighter yet. As before, there are four players in fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table.



With the exceptions here given, all is as in game 11.1. Moors replace the *Papi*. The cards are still counted in fours. Sets of three or four of a kind are still usually called *pariglie*, but will here be referred to as *cricche*. The word *Sminchiate* has now become *Sminchi*; this is merely the result of the substitution of the third person singular subjunctive for the second person plural imperative (*Lei* in place of *Voi*).

### *Deal*

After the first round of the deal, the player to the right of the dealer may, instead of saying '*A monte*' or '*La tengo*', say on the basis of his first five cards, '*Come vuole*', thus indicating to his partner that he has quite good cards but not good enough to warrant his saying, '*La tengo*'. IN frowns somewhat on this practice, but admits it to be quite widespread. (The recommendation in IN that possession of three out of the eight *carte da cinque* is needed to justify the first player's saying, '*La tengo*', seems excessively strict.)

### *Scoring and play*

There are now large counters called *Oche* as well as the tokens representing *partite*; but these are merely for convenience, 1 *Oca* being worth 10 *partite*. In *Partita a tutto andare*, instead of a single bowl or plate in the centre of the table, each side now has a bowl into which it puts all *partite* that it gains. However, there is now a further level of game points (*poste*, i.e. stakes) in which settlement is made, higher than the *partite*, which have now become simply a method of scoring rather than units of payment. A rubber (*partita*) will continue for several hands, and comes to an end as soon as one side has obtained 150 *partite*; that side has of course won the rubber. The rubber may end in the middle of a hand, either at the end of a trick in which the winning side gains the bonus for capturing the Bagattino or the Mondo, or immediately after a declaration in the course of the first trick. The winners gain 1 game point if their opponents have 75 *partite* or more, 2 game points if they have less than 75, and 3 if they have none. In

addition, a side that wins a single hand with 500 card points or more gains 1 game point, plus 1 more for every 100 points above 500; and a side that achieves *marcio* (wins all the tricks in a hand) also gains 1 game point. By the standard reckoning, a side that achieves *marcio* will have gained 923 card points by winning every trick and thus having all possible sequences and *pariglie*. This will result in a payment of 6 game points for the *marcio*, in addition to the game points for winning the rubber.

For declaring a *criccone* in the first trick, 20 *partite* are awarded, whether there were three *cricche* or more. Only 10 *partite* are awarded for being the first to put a *partita* in the bowl, and only 10 in all for winning a hand after saying '*La tengo*'. The number of points is no longer doubled when *marcio* is given.

#### *Instructions and information*

Players could instruct or inform their partners, not by gestures, but by means of conventional phrases (*giuochi*) uttered (only one at a time) either as they played a card to a trick or when the partner was about to lead to a trick. In practice, the partner with the stronger hand assumed direction of the play, the other supplying him with information. It was not illegal – only dangerous – to mislead the opponents by giving false information. It was not obligatory to obey one's partner's instructions, though considered bad play to disobey some (not all) of them. There was much disagreement about which *giuochi* were permissible. Apart from *Sminchi* (also expressed by *Sminchi il più bello*), which has the same significance as *Sminchiate* in the XVII-century game, asking partner to lead his highest trump, the most important of the *giuochi* are as follows. First those to be used when partner is about to lead.

*La posso servire d'un piccolo* (I can help you by means of a little one): I have the leading<sup>17</sup> trump; lead a small one to it.

<sup>17</sup> Throughout the explanations of *giuochi*, the expression 'leading trump' or 'leading card' of a suit is used to mean the highest trump or card of that suit that has not yet been played.

*Tiri de' trionfetti* (Draw small trumps): Lead a fairly low trump, but not the lowest; continue to do so when you next get the lead.

*Giochi* (Play): Lead the suit in which I declared a sequence.

*Giochi con loro* (Play with theirs): Lead the suit in which the opponents declared a sequence.

*Giochi di queste* (Play these): Lead the suit just played.

*Giochi le sue* (Play your own): Lead a King, particularly one you showed in a declaration.

*Giochi sempre le sue* (Keep playing your own): Lead out all your certain winners.

*Giochi pur sempre* (Keep on playing): Lead that suit in which the opponents have a card they are anxious to save.

*Li faccia andare* (Make them go): Lead a suit in which the opponents are short, to force out their trumps.

The following may be used when playing a card to a trick. One gesture unaccompanied by a verbal instruction, that of *drawing back* (*tirare indietro*), effected by drawing back slightly the card being played before releasing it and instructing partner not to play a high card to the trick, is allowed. Neither Pedini nor IN recognises the gesture of opening one's hand. Verbal instructions are as follows.

*Batto* (I strike): I have the leading card in this suit (*or in trumps if the trick is in trumps*). This may be accompanied by the gesture of striking the table.

*Batto indietro* (I strike behind): I have the second highest card outstanding in this suit (*or in trumps if the trick is in trumps*). This may be accompanied by the gesture of striking the table to the side.

*Sono in qualche luogo* (I am in some place):

(*when the trick is in trumps*) I have one of the three trumps below the Angel;

(*when the trick is in a plain suit*) I have the Cavallo or the Jack.

*Stricco*: I have just one more card left in this suit (*or in trumps if the trick is in trumps*).

*Striccando*: I have just two more cards left in this suit (*or in trumps if the trick is in trumps*).

The next *giuoco* should be used only when the speaker has four or more cards in the suit being played, or nine or more in trumps.

*In casa* (At home): (when a plain suit is being played) Play the highest card you have in the suit.

(when trumps are being played, and the partner is out of trumps) Throw a King on the trick, the opponent to your right will not beat my trump.

*Tiro a me* (I draw to me): I have the Bagattino but no other trump; keep your high trumps in order to save it.

*Ci vada col più bello* (Go here with the finest): (said only when the trick is in trumps) Play your highest trump.

*Ci vada con quello che ha* (Go here with the one you have): (said when the trick is in a plain suit) Play your highest card in this suit.

*Copra solamente* (Cover only): Beat the opponent's card with the lowest card you can.

*Volo* (I fly) or *Vado* (I go): I have the highest trump and no other.

There were also phrases to indicate what cards a player held after the first round of the deal; the author of IN greatly disapproves of the use of these.

#### *Variant*

Another form, *Partita alle Oche*, differing only in the method of scoring, is mentioned only in Ped (the manuscript account by Pedini of differences between the XVIII- and the XVII-century game). In this, using *Oche* as representing 10 *partite* each, in addition to the payment of game points as in *Partita a tutto andare*, 1 game point (*posta*) is gained for every *Oca* won by means of a declaration during the first trick, e.g. 1 for declaring three Kings, 2 for declaring four Tarocchi, etc.

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IN also describes another eleven games played with the Tarocchino pack. It fails to state the sizes of the sets in which, in these games, the cards are to be counted. The overwhelming probability, reinforced by a passing remark in GT, is however that they were always counted in sets of as many cards as there were players.

### 11.3 Six-handed Partita (mid-XVIII century)

The six players are divided into two fixed partnerships of three each, members of opposing sides being seated alternately. Each player is dealt ten cards in two rounds of five each, the dealer taking the last two cards and discarding two. Everything proceeds as in the four-handed game, with the following exceptions. During the first trick, a player may declare two *tarocchi*, two Kings or two Moors. His side receives no card points for such a declaration, but it gains 10 *partite* for any such pair. The award in *partite* for a *cricca* of three *tarocchi* or Kings or a sequence of three Moors is 20. Furthermore, a player may declare three pairs of *tarocchi*, Kings, Queens, Cavalli or Jacks: again, this scores no card points, but earns 20 *partite*. A player declaring two sequences gains 10 *partite* for his side; 20 for three sequences and 40 for four. There is an award of 10 *partite* for a declaration of six trumps or six *cartaccie*, 20 for seven, 40 for eight and so on. The rubber is won by the side first gaining 150 *partite*.

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The next game is interesting because it is almost identical with the principal modern game: it is, in effect, Partita without *partite*. IN remarks that, while it is played in Bologna itself, it is particularly favoured in the countryside. If we suppose that *partite*, and the special ways of scoring for them, were an accretion to the original form of Tarocchino, it may represent that original form.

### 11.4 Partitaccia (mid-XVIII century)

There are four players in two partnerships, partners facing each other across the table. At the end of each hand settlement is made on the basis of card points alone; there are no *partite*, declarations of ten trumps or ten *cartaccie* or scores for capturing the Mondo or Bagattino. Payment is thus made after each hand. There are two different ways of determining the payment. The simpler is that each of the winners receives 1 game point from one of the losers. Alternatively, they may receive 1 game point each if they have a point-total below 500, 2 if they

have 500 points or more. IN does not say whether partners may communicate with one another, or, if so, whether freely or by conventional phrases; to judge from the game nowadays played in Castel Bolognese (11.15), they may well have been allowed to communicate freely. After four hands, the players change partners and play another four hands.

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### 11.5 Milloni (mid-XVIII century)

This is a two-handed game. The dealer gives twenty cards to each of the two players, in four rounds of five each, and then gives two more cards to himself. Each player then discards ten cards, which will count to him at the end of the hand, unless he makes no tricks; he may not discard Kings or *tarocchi*. The dealer then gives ten more cards to each player, in two rounds of five each, and himself discards two more cards. Declarations of *cricche* and sequences, which may not include discarded cards, then take place before each plays to the first trick, to which the opponent of the dealer leads. Play and card points for cards and for *cricche* and sequences won in tricks, with 6 points for winning the last trick, are as usual. Each player records his score at the end of each hand, and keeps a running total; the rubber is completed at the end of the hand during which either player, or both, has gained 1,000 points, and is won by the player who then has the highest score. If, during any deal, either player finds that he is able to reach 1,000 points by making declarations of *cricche* and sequences on his first twenty or twenty-two cards, before he has discarded, he may do so and wins the game. Once he has discarded his ten cards, however, the hand must be played to the end before the winner is determined.

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### 11.6 Mattaccia (mid-XVIII century)

This is a reversed game, to be played by from five to seven players; the number of cards dealt to each depends on the number of players. Thus 10 cards must be

dealt to each of six players and 8 to each of seven. It would allow of 12 cards being dealt to each of five players, but, from the practice in the modern version of the game, it is quite likely that five players received only 10 cards each. The dealer takes no extra cards and there is no discard. Each player plays for himself. There are no initial declarations. At the end of the hand each player computes his point-total, composed of points on cards won in tricks, points for *cricche* and sequences among the cards he has won in tricks, and 6 points for the last trick. The winner of the hand is the player who has the *lowest* point-total. If, however, any player makes no points at all (takes no tricks), he is a loser; the winner in this case is the player who has the *highest* point-total. At any stage in a hand, a player with a strong hand may say '*Duro*'. This is an invitation to any player also with a strong hand to join him in denying tricks to the other players, in the hope that one of them will make no tricks. If another player accepts the invitation, he says nothing; it becomes evident only in the play. IN does not explain how the players settle between themselves at the end of the hand: presumably if everyone wins at least one trick the winner is paid by all the others, but if a player takes no tricks, that player pays all the others.

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### 11.7 Quarantacinque.(mid-XVIII century)

This game is played by two or three players. Each receives ten cards, in two rounds of five each, and each keeps a running total, from hand to hand, of the points he makes. The dealer takes no extra cards, and there is no discard. Declarations are made during the first trick as usual, and the usual scores for points on cards, for the last trick and for *cricche* and sequences among the cards won in tricks hold good. The winner of the rubber is the first player to obtain 45 points or more in all. There are two variant forms.

In the first form, each *cricca* or sequence is reckoned at its exact value, and a player may at any stage in the hand claim to have won the rubber by saying

*'Ho vinto'*. If he has really reached 45 points, he wins the rubber even if some other player has a higher point-total. If his claim is false, the rubber is ended; his opponent wins it, or, in the 3-handed game, that opponent who has the higher point-total, even if it is not as high as that of the player who made the false claim. A player who makes 45 points in the first hand of the rubber is paid double by each opponent. A player who attains 45 points in the second or later hand may claim victory but elect to continue to play out the hand; if he makes 45 points on that hand alone, he is paid double. However, if, by the end of the hand, one of his opponents has a higher point-total than he, that opponent wins the rubber, and the player who claimed victory gains nothing.

In the other form, the score for declarations during the first trick is rounded to the nearest multiple of 10: odd multiples of 5 are rounded *up*. A player is not allowed to claim victory until the end of a hand. The rubber ends when, at the end of a hand, some player has attained a running total of 45 points; if more than one has done so, the player with the higher point-total wins the rubber. In the two-handed game, the loser pays 1 game point to the winner if he has won in more than one hand, and 2 if he has won in a single hand. A variation is to add 1 game point for every 10 points by which the winner's point-total surpasses 45. In the three-handed game, if the rubber has been won over more than one hand, the player with fewest points pays 1 game point to the winner, the third player paying and receiving nothing; but if the winner reached 45 points in a single hand, each opponent pays him 1 game point. Under another system, each opponent pays 1 game point to the winner if he won over more than one hand, and 2 if he won in a single hand. Some add the bonus of 1 game point for each 10 points above 45.

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### 11.8 Settanta (mid-XVIII century)

This is another two-handed game, in which each player receives ten cards, in two rounds of five each, and the dealer takes no extra cards, and there is no discard. It also has two forms. In the first form, each declaration during the first trick is reckoned at its exact value, and likewise the points on cards and each *cricca* or sequence at the end of the hand. Each player keeps a running total, the winner being the one who first attains 70 points. A player may claim victory in the middle of a hand, under the same procedure as in Quarantacinque.

In the second form, the score for declarations during the first trick is rounded to the nearest multiple of 10: odd multiples of 5 are rounded *up*. The same happens to the scores at the end of the hand for points on cards, for the last trick and for *cricche* and sequences among the cards won in tricks. At any stage during a hand, either player may propose to the other that the score for the last trick be increased to 12 points. The second player may accept the proposal, may propose a further increase to 18 points, or may refuse the proposal. If he refuses, the 6 points for the last trick go to the player who proposed the increase, regardless of whether he wins it or not. If he proposes an increase to 18 points, the player who proposed the original increase has the same threefold option: he may accept, refuse or propose an increase to 24 points. If he refuses, 12 points for the last trick go to his opponent, whether he wins it or not. If he proposes an increase to 18 points, the other player has the same threefold option. This goes on until one or other player either accepts or refuses a proposal. Once a proposal has been refused, no other such proposal may be made in the course of the hand; but, when the last proposal was accepted, a new proposal may always be made during the play of the hand by the opponent of the player who made the previous proposal.

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### 11.9 Lecchini (mid-XVIII century)

Yet another two-handed game, with each player receiving ten cards, in two rounds of five each, while the dealer takes no extra cards, and there is no discard. The remainder of the pack is placed face down in the middle of the table. The winner of a trick takes the top card of this stock, shows it to his opponent, and adds it to his hand; his opponent then takes the next card, shows it to his opponent, and adds it to *his* hand. This continues until the stock is exhausted, when the hands are played out. In this way, every card will at the end of the hand belong to one or other player. Before playing to the first trick, each player declares any *cricche* or sequences he has in the usual way. If he picks a card from the stock that could be added to any of the *cricche* or sequences he then declared, he may then and there redeclare it and score for it, even if he has already played some or all of the cards that originally composed it; if he originally declared a *criccone* or three sequences, he may redeclare all the *cricche* or sequences each time he picks a card that can be added to one of them. (He cannot add in a card he already holds in his hand: e.g. if he originally declared a *grande* of three cards, and picks up the Stella, he may redeclare a *grande* of four cards, but cannot add in the Saetta he already holds in his hand.) Also, every time a player holds ten trumps (all his cards are trumps), he may declare them and scores 100 points for them; he does not need to have declared ten trumps in the first trick. Point-totals at the end of the hand will be large; the winner of the hand is the player with the higher point-total.

There are two methods of scoring, both involving *partite*. Under the first, settlement is made at the end of each hand. The winner's point-total, for declarations and, as usual, for points on cards, the last trick and *cricche* or sequences in cards won in tricks, is rounded down to the largest multiple of 25 equal to or below it: this is then divided by 25, and he receives that number of *partite*, together with 20 more if he scored 500 points or more, plus 10 more for every 100 points above 500. Under the second method, the rubber lasts for

several hands. *Partite* are awarded at the end of each hand in the same way as under the first method: the winner of the rubber is the player who first obtains 150 *partite*. He receives 1 game point, or, if his opponent has fewer than 75 *partite*, 2 game points. In addition, any player who wins a hand with 500 card points or more receives 1 game point, plus 1 for every 100 points above 500, even if the rubber is not yet completed.

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#### 11.10 Toppa (mid-XVIII century)

This is another game for two players, who receive only five cards each, the dealer of course taking no extra cards. Play is as usual, and the player with the higher point-total wins the game for 1 game point. If a player captures a King, the Mondo, the Bagattino or a Moor, he must say '*Toppa*' and then wins 1 game point (*giuoco*); if he forgets to say '*Toppa*', he does not win it. Some play that, in the latter case, the opponent may say '*Toppa*', and then wins 1 game point himself. If a player gives *marcio* to his opponent, i.e. wins every trick, then, if the opponent had the Matto, he must surrender it; the winner may then say '*Toppa*', and wins an additional game point.

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#### 11.11 Centini (mid-XVIII century)

This may be played either by two players or by four in fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table. Each player is dealt only five cards. Play is under the usual rules, and the players or sides keep a running total from hand to hand. A rubber ends when one player or side attains 100 points, and thereby wins the rubber; if the opposing player or side has not attained 50 points, the winner or winners are paid double.

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### 11.12 Cinquina (mid-XVIII century)

This is another game for two players, each of whom receives only five cards in the deal. Settlement is made after each hand, on the basis of the winner's point-total; the loser's score is ignored. He puts a corresponding number of tokens (*grane*) in a bowl.

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The existence of so many two-handed games may account for the fact that the cards are now counted in twos. The fact that in many games only the standard card points are significant, but not the *partite* or the special feats for which *partite* are awarded in the game of Partita, strongly suggests that the *partite*, and these special feats, were a subsequent addition to the original form of Tarocchino.

Partita a tutto andare continued to be played throughout the XIX century; it had hardly changed in the interim. In 1841 Dr Tommaso Verardini Prendiparte published anonymously in Bologna his *Il Tarocco ossia Giuoco della Partita* (TGP); a second edition appeared in 1872, and a third identical edition in 1919. Verardini evidently knew IN, since he occasionally repeats phrases from it, but it is clear that he also knew the game very well. Dr. Cuppi has discovered another interesting manuscript in the private collection of the Cassa di Risparmio di Bologna. This is entitled *La Partita o Giuoco del Tarocco* (PGT), and dates from 1851. It is by the XIX-century scholar Michelangelo Gualandi, and was intended for publication in an almanach in that year, but was not in fact published then. It describes the same game as Verardini's TGP, with a few slight variations. It was evidently prepared for publication as a separate booklet in 1872, but still did not appear in the event, its place being taken by the second edition of TGP.

### 11.13 Partita (XIX century)

All is as in game 11.2, with the following exceptions. The term *cricca* replaces *pariglia*. There is no longer any doubt about the right of the player on the dealer's right to say, '*Come vuole*', after the first round of the deal. If a side

declares five sequences or four *cricche* during the first trick, it is awarded 40 *partite*, if six sequences or five *cricche*, 80. As both sources agree, if in any hand one side gives *marcio* to the other (wins all the tricks) – a very rare feat – its score in points for declarations made during the first trick is doubled, and it is awarded 1,000 points; TGP criticises those who adhere to the ancient practice of awarding only the 923 obtained by the ordinary rules for points on cards, the last trick, sequences and *cricche*. The bonuses in *partite* for winning with 500 points or more remain as before; in addition, there is a bonus of 12 *partite* for winning with 300 points, but less than 400, and of 16 *partite* for winning with 400 points, but less than 500.

The *giuochi* (conventional phrases to instruct or inform the partner) have changed somewhat and become even more numerous. Note that neither Verardini nor Gualandi recognises any longer the signal (*Tiro a me* or *Tiro indietro*) of drawing back the card being played to indicate that the partner should not take the trick. We give here only the principal *giuochi*; others will be found in the Appendix to this chapter. Note that each of the top five trumps – the five unnumbered ones and the 16 (Stella) was called a *trionfo che rifiuta*, and that a low trump was called a *flichetto*.

Directives to be given to one's partner when he is about to lead include:

*Sminchi* or *Il bello* (TGP) or *Sminchi il più bello* (PGT): as before.

*Tiri un trionfetto* (TGP): like '*Tiri de' trionfetti*' before.

*Tiri un trionfo* (both sources): Lead your second highest trump.

*Tiri un piccolo* (PGT): Lead your lowest trump, even if the Bagattino.

*Giuochi alla lunga* (TGP): Lead your longest suit.

*Giuochi alla corta* (TGP): Lead your shortest suit.

*Giuochi le sue* (both sources): as before.

*Le sue non salvo* or *Mai passate* (PGT): I cannot save the suit of your declaration.

*Ha veduto le mie* (both sources): Lead the suit in which I declared a sequence.

*Giuochi con loro* (PGT): Lead the suit opponents declared or in which they are strong.

*Continui* (PGT): Lead highest card of the sequence just captured.

*Giuochi di quelle* (PGT): Lead suit of sequence previously captured.

*Sforzi* (PGT): Cover with a card that obliges the opponent to cover it with a higher one.

*Vada* (PGT): Cover with the highest card possible.

*Faccia andar tutti* or *Quella che dia sminchio* (PGT): If possible, play a card that obliges opponents to trump.

*Smuffi, salvi il cappotto* or *non piglio* (PGT): Shows a very poor hand from which no help can be expected.

*Una cattiva delle sue* (PGT): Play a low card of the suit in which you declared a sequence.

*Provi qualche cosa* (PGT): Play a high of the suit in which you declared a sequence.

The following are used to give information to the partner when he is about to lead:

*Buone* (TGP) or *Sempre buone* or *Buona assoluta* (PGT): I have three or four Kings.

*Qualche buona* (PGT) or *Qualche volta* (TGP): I have two Kings.

*Una buona* (both sources): I have only one King.

*Cattive* (both sources): I have no Kings.

*La servo* (both sources): I have the two highest trumps.

*La posso servire* (TGP): I have the leading trump and one other high one.

*Per poco* (PGT): I have the two highest trumps but very few others.

*Potrei servirla* (PGT): I have the Angelo and either the Sole or the Luna, and some other trumps.

*Unicamente* or striking the table after a declaration or after a card played by partner (PGT): I have the Angelo and no other trump.

*Il buttarne non m'incomoda* (PGT): Stop leading trumps.

*Uno* (PGT): (when a trump is led) I have only one trump left; *Una* (PGT): (when a suit is led) I have only one card of this suit left.

*Stringendo* (equivalent of *Striccando*) (PGT): I have only two cards of this suit left (including trumps).

*Restano* (PGT): I have only three cards of this suit left (including trumps).

*Disfa la mano* (PGT): I have four cards of this suit left (including trumps).

*Resta la mano* (PGT): I have five cards of this suit left (including trumps).

*La parte* (PGT): I have six cards of this suit left (including trumps).

*Più della parte* (PGT): I have seven cards of this suit left (including trumps).

*Sfondo* (PGT): I have eight cards of this suit left (including trumps).

*Unicamente* or *Per poco* or *Perchè lo sappia* or *Non sarà capotto* or *Prenderò una volta* (TGP): I have the Angelo but very few other trumps.

*Per un flichetto* or *Per un piccolo* (TGP): I have the Angelo.

*Per un trionfo* (both sources): I have the Mondo.

The following are among the phrases used to give information to one's partner when playing a card to a trick:

*Batto*: (said only when the trick is in trumps according to TGP) I have the leading trump.

*Qui batto* (TGP) or *Batto* (PGT): (said when the trick is in a plain suit) I have the leading card of this suit.

*Striccando* (TGP): *as before*.

*Indietro*: (said only when the trick is in trumps according to TGP) I have the second highest trump not yet played (according to GTP) I have the second highest card of this suit (including trumps).

*Volo* (TGP): *as before*.

*Sono in qualche luogo*: (TGP *as before*, but said only when the trick is in trumps); *Per un trionfetto* or *In qualche luogo* (PGT): I have the Sole or the Luna.

*Stricco in niente* (TGP): (said only when trumps are played) I have a small trump and the Matto.

*In niente* (TGP): (said only when trumps are played) I have the Matto but no more trumps.

The principal phrases used when playing a card to give a directive to one's partner are the following:

*Vada giuocando* (TGP): When you get the lead, lead a plain suit not yet played.

*Giuochi nuovi* (TGP): Lead that one suit that has not yet been played

*Torni lí* (TGP): Lead the suit of the preceding trick.

*Torni là* (both sources): Lead the suit of the last trick but one.

*Giuochi pure* (both sources): Keep leading that suit in which the opponents wish to save a card.

*Li faccia andare* (TGP) or *Faccia andare* or *Glìe la cerchi* (PGT): Lead a suit in which the opponents are void.

*In casa*. (TGP): *as before*.

*Faccia a me*. (TGP): Do not play your highest card to this trick.

*Vi metti il bello*. (TGP): Play your highest trump to this trick.

*Copra appena* (TGP) or *Appena* (PGT): like ‘*Copra solamente*’ before.

TGP also allows that, when both the opponents of the dealer have said *A monte*, the dealer’s partner may give him information by means of one of the following phrases:

*Sono cattive* or *Cinque cartaccie*: I have nothing at all.

*Vada avanti* or *Le dia bene*: I have almost nothing.

*Si regoli dalle sue*: I have some moderate cards.

*Due, uno dei quali rifiuta*: I have two trumps, one of them higher than the 15.

*Un trionfetto e cattivo* or *Una cartellina con un trionfetto*: I have a King and a low trump.

*Una goccia*: I have the Matto.

*Una goccietta*: I have the Mondo and no other trump.

*Una piccola goccia*: I have the Bagattino.

*Una regola*: I have two *carte da cinque*, or the Angelo and another high trump.

*Una regolina*: I have two Kings and a low trump.

*Due trionfetti*: I have two low trumps.

TGP also lists certain phrases which, though in use amongst some, he regards as unlawful; these are given in the Appendix to this chapter.

### *Variants*

In his PGT, Gualandi forbids the dealer to discard the Sun or the Moon, as well as Kings and *tarocchi*. He concurs with Verardini that a side making *marcio* should be awarded 1,000 rather than just 923 points. He remarks that the cards are counted in fours because there are four players: this



makes it likely that in all Bolognese Tarot games the cards were still at this time counted in sets equal to the number of players.

An oddity is the practice, reprobated by Verardini, but treated as perfectly normal by Gualandi, of announcing a sequence of Moors out of turn, even before the dealer has discarded; as Verardini remarks, this could on occasion affect the discard. Even in this the conservatism of Bolognese players is manifest; for IN also mentions the practice, though only in the catalogue of penalties for revokes, misdeals, etc.; the author thought it should be allowed when three Moors, but not when four, were announced.

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As Dr. Cuppi believes, Partita was probably in decline towards the end of the XIX century, weighed down by its own complexity; but the republication of Verardini's TGP in 1919 suggests that it survived in some circles until the early XX century. Nevertheless, Bolognese Tarocchi games have remained very popular in the city itself and in the surrounding countryside to this day; the Bolognese version of Tarot is undoubtedly one of the most skilled and subtle of all. The principal form now practised is Ottocento, which is a descendant of Partitaccia (game 11.4) rather than of Partita; Dr. Cuppi supposes that it originated in the later XIX century. After the third edition of Verardini's book in 1919, nothing was published about the game in the XX century until Dummett's *The Game of Tarot* in 1980. This was followed in Italian in 1983 by *Il Gioco dei Tarocchi bolognesi* (GTB) by G. Franco Laghi of the Banca Popolare di Bologna e Ferrara; in 1984 Giampaolo Dossena included a section on 'Tarocchino di Bologna' in his *Giochi di Carte italiani* (Milan, pp. 136-147) In 1992 this was followed by *Il Tarocchino bolognese* (Tb) by Girolamo Zorli, the enthusiastic promoter of the Accademia del Tarocchino bolognese. GTB, with great clarity, describes only the modern game, whereas Tb gives an account of the older form Partita. The titles of the two books exemplify the revival of the term

“Tarocchino”. A historical reconstruction is given in Marisa Chiesa’s ‘Quattro giochi di società con il Tarocchino Bolognese’ in *Antichi Tarocchi Bolognesi* by Giordano Berti and Marisa Chiesa (Turin, 1995); and there is also a description of Bolognese Tarocchi games by Maurizio Barilli (MB) on the Internet (at <http://utenti.lycos.it/taroccobolognese>) and a description of Ottocento and Partita on the Accademia website (at [www.tarocchinobolognese.it](http://www.tarocchinobolognese.it)).

#### 11.14 Ottocento (present day)

There are four players in fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table. Unless partnerships have been agreed beforehand, the players cut, those cutting the two highest cards becoming partners, and likewise those cutting the two lowest; the one cutting the highest card becomes the dealer to the first hand; the deal thereafter passes to the right. Fifteen cards are dealt to each player, in three rounds of five at a time, the dealer taking the last two cards and discarding two; these two are surrendered to the opponents if the dealer’s side takes no tricks, as is the Matto. There are no invitations to go *a monte*. *Partite* are not used, and there are no declarations of ten trumps or ten *cartaccie* (a term no longer in use) or special scores for capturing the Mondo or the Bagattino. The point-values of the cards, the rules about the dealer’s discard, the 6 points for the last trick, the rules governing *cricche* and sequences and their values, the declarations of *cricche* and sequences during the first trick and the scores at the end of the hand for those formed from the cards won by both partners together are all as before; the term *pariglie* is no longer in use. It is the custom, when making any declaration during the first trick, to announce what it is. The principal difference from game 11.4 is that the cards are now counted in *twos*, making the total number of points on cards 87 (excluding the 6 for the last trick). At the end of each hand, one side lays out the important cards it has won in tricks in the pattern illustrated below. Suppose the side laying out has two *cricche*, of *tarocchi* and of Cavalli, for which it scores 18 and 13 points respectively. It has

three sequences: a *grande* of five (Angelo, Mondo, Begato, 16 and 15), a sequence of four in Swords (King, Begato, Cavallo and Ace) and one of four Aces (three genuine Aces and the Begato): these are worth 50 points together, doubled to 100 because there are three of them. The side thus scores 131 points on *cricche* and sequences. They lay out their cards as follows:

| Trumps   | Swords | Batons | Cups | Coins |
|----------|--------|--------|------|-------|
| Angelo   | K      |        | K    |       |
| Mondo    |        |        |      | Q     |
|          | C      | C      |      | C     |
|          |        | J      |      | J     |
| 16       | A      | A      | A    |       |
| 15       |        |        |      |       |
| One Moor |        |        |      |       |
| Begato   |        |        |      |       |

From this it can be seen at once what *cricche* and sequences this side has. It can also be seen that the opponents have a *cricca* of three Queens (14 points) and two sequences, one of three cards in Batons for 10 points (King, Queen and Matto) and one of four Moors for 15 points (three genuine Moors and the Matto): 39 points in all. If the opponents had been laying out the cards, they would have put out all their court cards and Aces, the Sole, Luna, 14 (to show where the *grande* ends), three Moors and the Matto. Then an empty card (*scartino* – a card without point-value) is laid below every counting card of the side laying out the hand, while the remaining empty cards are arranged in pairs; that side's score for cards is determined from this, taking into account the score for the last trick. By subtracting that side's score for cards from 93, the opponents' score for cards, including the last trick, is found. By adding the score of each side for *cricche* and sequences, its score for cards and its score for any declarations in the first trick, the total score of each side for the hand is arrived at.

A rubber extends for several hands, and is won by the side first reaching 800 points: hence the name of the game. If a side can reach this total from the declarations made during the first trick, it may claim victory by saying "Fuori"

("Out") and the rubber is over. If the score of the dealer's side is sufficiently close to 800, the dealer may look at the first 15 cards he has dealt himself, leaving the two extra cards face down on the table; he may then make any declarations he can on those 15 cards, and if they bring his side's score to 800 points, claim victory for his side. In this case, the other three players in turn make what declarations they can, claiming victory for their sides if they are able to; the dealer, having taken the two extra cards into his hand, may make no more declarations. If neither side has claimed victory, the hand must be played out, and, if both sides have reached 800 points, that with the higher score is the winner.

Players of Ottocento in Medicina do not permit signals to be given by a player to his partner in the course of play. There are, however, three signals, *busso*, *volo* and *striscio*, that a player, when leading to a trick, is in all other localities permitted to make to his partner: they must be visible to the opponents also. A *busso*, sometimes called *batto*, is effected by striking the table with the closed fist: it indicates strength. Its basic significance is to indicate possession of the highest or second highest card of the suit led; it asks the partner to play so as to save his high cards in that suit. Hence, if made when a trump is led before the Angelo has been played, it signals possession of either the Angelo or the Mondo, or of the Mondo if the Angelo has already been played.<sup>18</sup> The rules of the Accademia disallow the use of any signal when leading a plain suit before either the King of that suit has been played or else all the trumps have been played. In these circumstances the *busso* indicates possession of the highest outstanding card of the suit led and asks the partner to play his highest card in that suit and to return the suit if he wins or when he later obtains the lead. A *volo* is executed by tossing the card lightly in the air so that it 'flies' down to the table: it signals that the player has no more cards in that suit. Some players allow that it may be

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<sup>18</sup> This is known colloquially as *bussata* or *battuta*.

accompanied by the *busso*, in which case the intention is either to trump the opponents' court cards in that suit, to save an important trump or to exhaust the trumps of the player giving the signal so that he can then throw his high cards on his partner's tricks; but tournament rules do not allow these two signals to be given together. If, however, the *volo* is not accompanied by the *busso*, it warns the partner not to lead that suit again. Finally, the *striscio* may be made when leading either trumps or a plain suit, and is effected by scraping the card led across the table. It tells the partner that the player still has cards in the suit led, but, in trumps, denies possession of the Angelo or Mondo, and, in a plain suit, denies possession of the King. In trumps it invites the partner to lead trumps as often as possible, if he deems it advisable. One motive may be to capture the Begato; another may be that the player giving the signal has very few trumps left, and wishes to throw valuable cards on his partner's tricks. In a plain suit the signal warns the partner of the danger of playing a valuable card to the trick. Some players allow signals to be made only when, if trumps are being led, the Angel has already been played, or, if a plain suit is being led, the King has already been played. It is obviously physically impossible to combine a *striscio* with a *volo*, while a combination of a *striscio* with a *busso* would be contradictory.

### *Variants*

Some play 1,000 or 1,500 points up instead of 800.

A practice now very largely out of use is that, after computing the scores of each side when the play of the hand is ended, each side's total score is rounded up or down to the nearest multiple of 5, and is then recorded as the result of dividing the rounded total by 5 (e.g. 192 would be recorded as 38). The game is won by the side first attaining 160 reduced points.

Some players allow the signal of striking the table at the side to indicate that they have the second highest card of the suit being played. This practice is usual among older players in Casalecchio.

In the form of the game known as 'Quattro scartate', the rubber consists of four hands, that side winning that has the higher cumulative score.

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The *busso* and *volo* signals are also used in Tressette, from which they may well have been derived; in Tressette the signals are given verbally by many, but many give them only by gesture.

There are only twenty cards that cannot form part of a *cricca* or sequence, so that great care is needed in the play. Note that at least one side must have a sequence of Aces, and at least one a sequence of Moors. It is of great importance to bring home or capture the Begato, because of its role as *contatore*. Kings must be brought home, because without them there can be no sequence in those suits; and it is of importance to obtain at least three sequences, because the scores for them are then doubled.

In Castel Bolognese, they play another descendant of the game of Partitaccia (11.4) which we may name Cinquecento.

### 11.15 Cinquecento (Castel Bolognese, present day)

The game is almost always called simply 'Tarocchi' in Castel Bolognese. The lowest trump is called by the old name Bagattino, and the Moors are called *Mori*. There are four players in two partnerships, partners facing one another across the table. A rubber ends either when one side has won three hands or, as the name Cinquecento suggests, when one side has won a hand with at least 500 points. A side that has attained a total of 500 points in one hand is paid triple the value of a rubber gained just by winning three hands. (In Partitaccia, payment was only doubled for making 500 points in one hand.) The cards are dealt in rounds of five each. After the first two rounds of the deal, the players pick up their ten cards and look at them; in the meantime, the last five cards are dealt to each, but are left face down for the time. At this stage, it is standard for the first two players to say, 'A monte'. The third player then asks his partner what cards he has. On the basis

of the answer and his own cards, he either picks up his last five cards or says, '*A monte*'. If he picks up his last five cards, so does everyone else: the dealer gives himself two extra cards and discards, and the hand is played out. If the third player says, '*A monte*', the dealer asks his partner what cards he has, and according to his answer either picks up his last five cards and gives himself two more, all then playing out the hand, or himself says, '*A monte*'. In the latter case, all throw in their hands and the next dealer gives out cards. During the play of a hand, players may freely exchange information about what cards they hold; a player about to lead is usually advised by his partner what to lead. This is in the spirit of the Partita played in the XVIII and XIX centuries, and makes it easier to gain 500 points in a single hand than if the game were played in silence. The chief objective in the play of a hand is to prevent the opposing side from making 500 points.

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There are several other games played with the Tarocco bolognese, of which the most skilful and exciting is Terziglio, the only one of them to incorporate a simple form of bidding.

#### **11.16 Terziglio (Bologna, present day)**

As its name implies, this is a three-handed game: one player plays against the other two in temporary combination. Before the first hand, each player draws a card from the pack; the player to the left of the one drawing the highest card becomes the dealer to the first hand. Each player receives 18 cards in three rounds of six each: the remaining eight cards are placed face down in the centre of the table, forming the *pozzo* (well) or *pozzetto*. Each player in turn, starting with the player to the dealer's right, may make a positive bid higher than one previously made, or may pass, but cannot re-enter the bidding having passed. There are only two positive bids, 'Gioco', usually made by saying '*Posso?*' ('Can I?') or '*Se si può*' ('If it is possible'), and 'Solo', usually made by saying '*Faccio*

*di mio* ('I will make do with my own'); either of these may be made as the first positive bid, but there is no right to 'hold' a later bid, so that a Solo bid ends the bidding, and there is only one round of bidding. (In any case, it will rarely happen that two players both believe themselves to have strong enough hands for a Solo.) If a previous bidder has made a bid of 'Gioco' (i.e. has said 'Posso?'), a later player who is content to pass does so by saying '*Va bene*'. If all pass, there is a new deal by the next dealer. It is unusual for neither of the first two players to make a positive bid. If the declarer has said 'Posso?', he picks up the *pozzo*, adds it to his hand without showing it to the others and discards eight cards, which count to him at the end of the hand unless he has made no tricks at all, in which case they count to the opponents; as usual, he may not discard *carte da cinque*. If he said, 'Solo' or 'Faccio di mio', the *pozzo* remains undisclosed, and goes, at the end of the hand, to the winner of the last trick. In either case, the declarer leads to the first trick and plays alone against the other two; declarations of *cricche* and sequences may be made as usual before playing to the first trick. To play a simple game, taking the *pozzo* and discarding accordingly, is known as *andare su* (to go up); to play a Solo is called *fare di suo* (to make do with one's own). Play is under the usual rules, and the opponents keep their cards in a single pile. Play takes place in silence. The opponents are allowed to use the signals *busso*, *volo* and *striscio* when leading to a trick, but only when the highest card of the suit led (the Angel or the King) has already been played; *striscio* may be used with a plain suit as well as with trumps, and always indicates that the player has a large number of cards of the suit. At the end of the hand, both sides score in the usual manner for *cricche* and sequences in the cards won in tricks and for points on cards, including 6 for the last trick; the cards are counted in twos, an odd empty card counting nothing. The declarer wins if his point-total is greater than that of the opponents, and loses if it is equal or lower. The point-total of the winning side is rounded up or down to a multiple of 50 (up only if it fell short of a multiple of 50 by less than 5 points), and the winning side scores as game points



(*poste*) the result of dividing the rounded figure by 50, or twice this if a Solo was played; the opposing side scores nothing. (Points used formerly to be reckoned in multiples of 25, as older players recall.) If the declarer wins, each opponent pays him the value of the score so calculated; if he loses, he pays each opponent the value of the score. (MB agrees with this, but also mentions a method under which the *poste* result from subtracting 10 from the point-total and dividing the result by 10, rounding down if the remainder is 4 or less.) But if the declarer has made *capotto* (won all the tricks), he is awarded 40 game points; likewise for the opponents. According to MB, the declarer in the last hand deals the next.

#### *Variant*

MB allows a player who has previously made a positive bid to 'hold' a later Solo. This variant is practised in Casalecchio.

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#### 11.17 Terziglio (Monzuno, present day)

All is as in game 11.16, with the following exceptions. Each player receives 19 cards, in three rounds of five each and one of four: the *pozzo* therefore consists of only five cards. The player to the dealer's right always leads to the first trick. The three signals, *busso*, *volo* and *striscio* may be used by an opponent of the declarer when leading to a trick, but they are usually expressed in words and it is not required that the highest card of the suit led should have been played. The word '*corto*' may also be used to indicate that the player has very few cards in that suit. In general, the two opponents may freely give each other information about the cards they hold.

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Many of the other games recorded in IN have survived, sometimes in slightly modified forms.

**11.18** Mattazza (present day)

This reverse game is essentially the same as game 11.6. It may be played by from three to five players, according to GTB, or from three to six, according to MB; a few decades ago four was a favourite number, but five is now preferred. The players cut to determine the first dealer; thereafter the deal passes to the right. The dealer gives ten cards to each player in two rounds of five at a time. The dealer takes no extra cards and there is no discard and no declarations before play. Each player plays for himself, and in each hand there is a loser, or perhaps more than one, rather than a winner. Provided that each player wins at least one trick, the loser is the player who, at the end of the hand, has the *most* card points. These points include those for *cricche* and sequences among the cards he has won in tricks and 6 points for winning the last trick (this is explicitly stated by GTB; MB is ambiguous about whether there is a score for the last trick or for combinations of cards taken in tricks by the end of the hand). If two or more players make an equal number of points, greater than those made by any other player, they are all losers. If, however, any player or players make no points at all, or, what amounts to the same, take no tricks, he or they are the losers; the player making the most points is then not a loser. Each loser acquires an adverse mark at the end of the hand. When there are four players, this is shown by drawing a cross, each arm of which represents one of the players, and then making a small cross line (*tacca*) across the corresponding arm for each adverse mark scored by any of the players. The cards are counted in sets equal in number to the players, in the standard way: a set containing no counting card is worth 1 point, one containing just one counting card is worth the value of that card, one containing two counting cards is worth 1 less than the sum of their values, one containing three counting cards 2 less, and so on. When there are fewer than 5 players, the rubber ends when either two players have each scored 3 or more adverse marks, or one player has scored 6 (according to MB) or 5 (according to GTB); in the former case, GTB lays down that the two each pay 1 game point

(*posta*) to each of the rest, while in the latter, the player with 5 adverse marks pays 3 game points to each of the rest on his own. According to GTB, when there are five players the rubber ends when two players have 2 adverse marks or one has 4; in this case the players with 2 adverse marks each pay 1 game point to each adversary, while a player with 4 adverse marks pays 4 game points. According to MB, when there are more than four players, the rubber ends when three have 2 adverse marks or one has 4. The expression '*Duro*' of game 11.6 has now become '*A duro*'; a player with a strong hand may say this on his turn to play at any time during a hand, thereby inviting any player also with a strong hand to join him in denying tricks to the other players, in the hope that one of them will make no tricks. If another player accepts the invitation, he normally says nothing; it becomes evident only in the play. It is allowable, when "*A duro*" has been said, to use the signals *busso*, *striscio* and *volo*. The player who held the Matto can at the end of the hand give in exchange for it to the player who won the trick to which it was played a card that most increases that player's point-total or reduces his own.

### *Variants*

According to GTB and MB, in some circles the dealer is always the player who lost the preceding hand; it is not said what happens if two lost.

Also according to MB, there is an alternative procedure for settling the final outcome of the rubber. A limit of from 2 to 6 adverse game points is fixed by agreement. As soon as any player reaches this limit, he drops out of play, which continues until only two players are left: those who dropped out pay these two.

MB recognises other conventional expressions than '*(Vado) a duro*' that may be used. He gives these as: '*Mettere*' or '*Farsi delle carte buone*', asking the next player to lead a high card (trump or King); '*Farsi i migliori*', asking for the next player's highest trump; '*Travalicare*' or '*Andare in campagna*', asking for the lead of a low suit card; and '*Fare il*

*Pagatore*', asking the player who said '*A duro*' to play a high card, so that the player concerned can throw a high-scoring card on it. (This is principally to test the sincerity of the player who said '*A duro*', since it is lawful to say that with the intention to mislead.) Presumably these expressions are used in the polite imperative rather than the infinitive. GTB allows a player who wishes to ally himself with one who has said '*A duro*' to declare this by saying '*Io ci sto*'.

GTB recognises a variant for 5 players (presumably it could also be used by 6). In this, the player to the dealer's right, who will lead to the first trick, must first say whether the play is to be *alla buona* or *alla matta*. If it is *alla buona*, play and scoring are as usual, save that if the player to the dealer's right is a loser, he must pay double. If the play is *alla matta*, a player who takes no tricks is still a loser; but, if every player takes at least one trick, the loser is the player with the *lowest* point-total; as before, if the player to the dealer's right is a loser, he must pay double. There is no rule determining the end of the rubber; but a player with 3 or more adverse marks must pay double, and one with 5 must not only pay double but must lead to the next hand and pay double if he is a loser in that.

A variant called *Mattazza Cento* is played in Medicina. In this, if a player with a strong hand can make 100 points, he becomes the winner.

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There are also some two-handed games still played.

### 11.19 Millone or Mille (present day)

The players cut to decide the dealer to the first hand, the one cutting the higher card becoming the first dealer. This two-handed game is almost exactly the same as the XVIII-century game of *Milloni* (game 11.5). As in 11.5, the dealer gives 20 cards to his opponent and himself, in four rounds of 5 each, and then two additional cards to himself. Each player then discards ten cards, which count to

him at the end of the hand, and with which he can then form combinations, but cannot be used for play or for declarations during the first trick. (As usual, Kings and *tarocchi* may not be discarded, and other trumps only if it is unavoidable.) After the discards, the dealer gives 10 more cards to each player, in two rounds of five, and then himself discards two more cards; each now has a hand of 20 cards. The dealer's opponent leads to the first trick. Players keep a cumulative score from hand to hand. The winner of the rubber is the first to claim truly that he has attained 1,000 points; he does this by saying 'Fuori' ('Out'), thereby bringing play to an end. A player may say 'Fuori' in the course of play if he can claim victory by having 1,000 points including those for declarations made during the first trick. The dealer has the right to claim victory if he can reach 1,000 points on combinations before play begins; he may not use for this purpose the two extra cards he gave himself after the first 20 and before the discard. These two cards he must leave face down until both he and his opponent have had a chance to say 'Fuori'. According to MB, he must make the claim, if at all, *before* the discards are made from the first 20 cards dealt to each, declaring combinations from those 20 cards. If he does not do so, he takes the two extra cards into his hand; his opponent now has the right to claim victory on the basis of combinations in his own first 20 cards. If he does not do so either, both now discard their 10 cards in the usual way, the dealer gives out 10 more cards to each and discards two cards, and play proceeds as usual; the hands must now be fully played out, and if, at the end of the hand, both players have attained 1,000 points, the one with the higher score wins. GTB appears to lay down, on the contrary, that a claim to victory by the dealer or his opponent before play begins is to be made *after* the discards of 10 cards have been effected; although the dealer may still neither look at nor use his two extra cards for this purpose; but the text is not entirely clear on the point.

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**11.20** Centino (present day)

This game is the descendant of the XVIII-century game of Centini (game 11.11); it can nowadays be played only by two players, not by four. It is now played with a reduced pack of only 42 cards, from which all the numeral cards of the suits other than the Aces have been omitted. Each player is dealt only five cards. Play is under the usual rules, and the players keep a running total from hand to hand. Declarations may be made during the first trick, and the score for them noted; but at the end of the hand, only that player who has the higher score adds it to his running total. A rubber ends when one player attains 100 points, and thereby wins the rubber. If the opposing player has attained 50 points, the winner gains 1 game point, if he has not, the winner gains 2 game points.

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**11.21** Centocinquanta (present day)

This simple two-handed game is played 150 points up, as its name indicates. The players cut to determine the first dealer, who is the one who cuts the higher card. The dealer gives 15 cards, five at a time, to each, starting with his opponent, and takes two extra cards for himself and discards two under the usual constraints. The remaining cards are set aside and are not used in the play. The dealer's opponent leads to the first trick. When either player has made 150 points, including those for combinations of cards, he may say 'Fuori', bringing the rubber to an end.. If the dealer in any hand can claim 150 points on combinations included in his 15 cards, not including the two extra, which he must leave face down, he may say 'Fuori'; if he picks up the two extra cards, his opponent has the same right to say 'Fuori'. The dealer may not say 'Fuori' on combinations he can make after he has added the two extra cards to his hand, but the hand must be played to the end; if both then have 150 points or more, the one with the higher point-total wins.

*Variant*

Some play 151 or 200 points up, in which case the game is known as Centocinquantuno or Duecento. In Monzuno the game is called Duecentocinquanta and, as its name implies, is played 250 points up, but is otherwise the same.

Under the name 'Quindici', the foregoing game may be played with game points equal to the number of card points divided by 10, rounded down if the remainder is 4 or less and up if it is 5 or more. The winner is the one who first obtains 15 game points. Some require him to obtain 20 or 21 game points, in which case the game is called Venti or Ventuno.

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Bolognese players invented, at an early date, one of the most fascinating and skilful of all forms of Tarot, and have continued to play it from the XV century to the XXI. May they long continue to do so.

### Appendix to Chapter 11: Other Giuochi

Among phrases to be used when one's partner is about to lead to a trick, IN cites the following as not often used or of dubious legality:

*Vadi giocando* or *Minci, minci*: Lead a suit that has not yet been played.

*Giochi di quelle* (Play those): Lead, not the suit that has just been played, but the one played a little earlier.

*Giochi sempre delle buone* (Keep on playing good ones): Lead court cards; I have the Kings.

*Giochi sempre delle cattive* (Keep on playing bad ones): I do not have a single King; lead numeral cards.

He gives the following as used by some, but as to be absolutely prohibited:

*La posso servire per dei piccoli* (I can help you by means of little ones): I have the two leading trumps.

*Vadi giocando le sue* (Go ahead with playing your own): Lead the lowest card of a suit sequence you have announced.

*Mi faccia andare* (Make me go): Lead the suit in which I am void and can trump.

Among phrases to be used when playing a card to the table, IN cites also the following:

*Me ne restano* (Some remain to me): I have three more cards of the suit being played, or (*when trumps are being played*) three more trumps.

*Particina*: (*when the trick is in trumps*) I have four more trumps.

*Parte giusta*: (*when the trick is in trumps*) I have five more trumps.

*Più della pane*: (*when the trick is in trumps*) I have six more trumps.

*Sfondo* (I break): (*when the trick is in a plain suit*) I have four more cards of this suit; (*when the trick is in trumps*) I have seven more trumps.

*Quanto se ne può avere* (How many more of these can be had): (*when the trick is in trumps*) I have eight more trumps.

*Ne giochi sempre di queste* (Keep on playing these): Lead this suit when you get the lead.

*Qui butto via* (Here I am throwing away): I have no high card in this suit.

*Faccia a me* (Do to me) or *A me* (To me): Do not play your highest card, or keep back your high trumps; I have a card we need to save.



IN lists the following phrases as unlawful:

*Batto forte* (I strike hard): I have the two highest cards of the suit, or (*when trumps are being played*) the two highest trumps.

*Batto fortissimo* (I strike very hard): I have the three highest cards of this suit, or (*when trumps are played*) the three highest trumps.

*Indietro forte* (Hard back): I have the two cards immediately below the highest in this suit, or in trumps.

*Indietro fortissimo* (Very hard back): I have the three cards immediately below the highest in this suit, or in trumps.

*Stricco in niente*: (*when trumps are played*) I have one small trump left.

IN adds a number of phrases which, it says, are much in use during the process of deciding whether to go *a monte*, to inform one's partner what one has in the first five cards dealt. IN objects to the practice, and even more to that of actually showing one's partner one's five cards. The phrases are:

*Ho la regola* (I have the rule): I have three good trumps, or two good trumps and a King, the Bagattino or the Matto.

*Ho la regolina* (I have the little rule): I have one *carta da cinque* (King or tarocco) and two small trumps.

*Ho li bugiardi* (I have the liars): I have four trumps.

*Ho l'Arlià*: I have two Kings.

*Ho due romiti* (I have two hermits): I have the Kings of Cups and of Coins. (These two Kings are shown as having beards, and so are called 'hermits'.)

*Ho due pellegrini* (I have two pilgrims): I have the Kings of Swords and Batons. (These two Kings are shown as clean-shaven.)

*Ho un romito*: I have the King of Cups or of Coins.

*Ho un pellegrino*: I have the King of Swords or of Batons.

*Ho tre trionfetti*: I have three low trumps.

*Ho una goccia* (I have a drop): I have one *carta da cinque*.

*Ho un trionfo che rifiuta con un piccolo*: I have one of the five highest trumps and one low one.

*Ho due trionfi con una stanella*: I have two trumps and a Queen.

Verardini cites also the following directives to a partner about to lead:

*Se è il suo caso buttarne:* I have good trumps but no Kings; if you have Kings, lead low trumps.

*Sarebbe al mio caso:* I have Kings but poor trumps; lead a plain suit.

*Se fossero belli:* If you have the Mondo or two high trumps, lead your highest trump.

*Se fossero molti:* If you have at least seven trumps, lead your highest.

*Se non se ne serve:* If you do not have a King or any other good lead, lead your highest trump.

*Se ne ha delle sue:* If you have any Kings, lead one.

He further cites the following two informative phrases to be used when your partner is about to lead:

*Non mi conti:* I have poor trumps and no Kings.

*Il buttarne non mi dà fastidio:* I have at least six trumps.

There are many phrases to be used when playing a card. The following are informative:

*Anche una buona:* (when a suit is played) I have a court card, but not the leading one.

*Anche una buonina:* I have the Ace of the suit.

*Una cattiva:* I have just one low card of this suit.

*Restano:* I have three more cards of this suit, or three more trumps.

*Disfo la mano:* I have four more cards of the suit, or four more trumps.

*Anche la mano:* I have five more cards of the suit, or five more trumps.

*Più della mano:* (when a suit is played) I have six more cards of this suit.

*Resta la parte:* (when trumps are played) I have six more trumps.

*Più delta parte:* I have seven more trumps.

*Molti:* I have eight more trumps.

*Sfondo:* I have nine trumps.

*Qui sopra:* I have the trump immediately above the one I am playing.

*Qui di sotto:* I have the trump immediately below the one I am playing.

*Uno:* I have just one more trump, not the leading one.

*Quasi volo:* I have the leading trump and one or two low ones.

*Sono in un buco:* I have the Luna.

*Sono in un piccolo buco:* I have the 16.

The following further directives may be given to one's partner while one plays a card:

*Se ne ha delle sue:* When you get the lead, lead a King if you have one.

*Seguiti:* Win the trick if you can and lead the same suit.

*Questo è il suo giuoco:* Lead this suit whenever you get the lead.

*Qui vanno:* Lead a low card in this suit to force the opponents' trumps.

*Da principio:* Lead that suit, other than trumps, which was the first to be played.

*Vi metti quello che ha:* Play your highest card of this suit.

*Qui butto via:* as before.

*Per me non istia:* I have the Matto.

*Sarebbe al mio caso:* Play out your trumps as soon as possible, because all my cards are winners.

*Vi pensi lei* or *Si faccia del bene:* I am unable to make a break in the opponents' *grande*; I leave this to you.

*Tutto è buono:* Do not play your Matto, but capture this trump, if you are able to.

*Sforzi:* Cover the opponent's high trump with a higher one.

*Non v'è rimedio:* I have to play this card, but do not want to lose it; save it if you can.

*Non salvo mai niente:* Throw a King on this trick you can.

*Verso di me:* Play the cards you are afraid of losing

*Se ne faccia:* Lead Kings and other certain winners.

*Prenderò:* If you can, win each trick to which opponents play high.

*Lasci fare a questa:* Play low.

*Badi qui:* Keep back the King and court cards of this suit.

*Qui vi bado io:* I have good cards in this suit.

*Sa ove deve badare:* Keep back your court cards in the suit sequence announced by the opponents.

*Mai passate*: If you have the King of any suit, play it the first time that suit is played.

*Quella buona*: Play the good card you have told me that you have.

*Quell'una*: Lead the single card of a suit you have told me that you have.

*Quella cattiva*: Lead the low card of a suit which you have told me that you have.

*Quella bonina*: Lead the Ace you have told me you have.

*Non se ne è più giuocato* [1841] or *Non se n'è più giuocato* [1919]: Lead that suit that has been played only once.

*Se è mia non s'incomodi* or *Tenghi coperto*: (said when leading a high trump) If the opponent does not beat this card, do not beat it either.

*La copra*: Win the trick.

*Quello che sta bene* or *Quando non v'è interesse*: (said when leading a high trump) Win the trick if the opponent plays one of the four trumps below the Angelo, or throws any good card, otherwise not.

*È tempo di partire*: Play the Mondo or other high card of the *grande* as soon as you safely can.

*Sa dove ha da venire*: As soon as that suit is led in which I have the leading card, throw a card you are afraid of losing.

*Quello che non fa per lei*: Lead the card you least mind losing.

Finally, Verardini lists a number of phrases he considers unlawful, as follows:

*La posso servire per dei piccoli*: as before.

*Va giuocando le sue*: as before.

*Mi faccia andare*: as before.

*Giuochi sempre buone*: I have all four Kings; lead court cards.

*Batto forte*: I have the three leading trumps. (The meaning has changed from 'two' to 'three' since the time when IN was written.)

*Batto fortissimo*: I have the four leading trumps.

*Batto indietro*: I have the two leading trumps.

*Indietro forte*: I have the second and third highest trumps.

*La Bugia*: I have four small trumps. (This and the following phrases were probably used to guide the dealer in deciding whether to go *a monte*.)

*Ho l'Arlià*: I have the 16.

*Ho un romito: as before.*

*Ho un pellegrino: as before.*

*Tre trionfi: I have three good trumps.*

*Per dei trionfi: I have two or three of the four cards below the Angelo.*

*Per dei flichetti: I have several low trumps.*

*Un flichetto ed una sottanella: I have a low trump and a Queen.*

*Quattro flichetti: I have four low trumps.*

*Una goccia con un trionfo or Una cartellina con un trionfo: I have a King and one of the top five trumps.*

*Ne ho di questa roba: I have a large number of small trumps. (This was presumably used in play.)*

*Due che rifiutano: I have two of the five highest trumps.*

It is surprising that, when so large a number of these phrases had come to be permitted, restraint was not cast aside altogether, and partners allowed to give each other what information or instructions they pleased; but there was evidently always a distinction felt between what was and what was not permissible.

## CHAPTER 12

### Minchiate

The game of Minchiate is played with a very special kind of pack, which differs from all other forms of Tarot pack in having forty trump cards. With the *Matto* and the usual fifty-six suit cards, this makes a pack of ninety-seven cards. The number of trumps is increased by the addition of twenty new subjects: the missing cardinal virtue, Prudence, the three theological virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity, the four elements, Fire, Air, Earth and Water, and the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Since the ordinary Tarot pack contains 21 trumps, it would appear necessary to add only 19 new ones to obtain 40; the explanation is that in the Minchiate pack there are just three cards, numbered II, III and IIII, in the place in the sequence immediately above the Bagatto that is usually occupied by the four Papal and Imperial ones (Pope, Popess, Emperor and Empress).

It is clear that the Minchiate pack and the game played with it were invented in Florence. There are many Florentine references to it in the XVI century, one of the earliest being in the dialogue by Pietro Aretino (1492-1556) called *Le Carte Parlanti*, first published in 1543<sup>1</sup> and also known as Part 3 of his

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<sup>1</sup> The date of this work, as containing one of the earliest references to the Minchiate or Germini pack, is of some importance. S.R. Kaplan, on p. 28 of *The Encyclopedia of Tarot* (New York, 1978), after saying that Aretino wrote the third part of his *Ragionamenti* in about 1540, adds that 'The supplement dealing with cards – *Les Cartes Parlantes* – was not actually published until 1589', and cites in his bibliography (p. 349) an edition (in Italian, not French) published in London in that year, a copy of which is in his own collection. There is no earlier edition in the Bodleian Library, the British Library or the Bibliothèque Nationale; but the date, 1543, cited here for the first publication of this dialogue of Aretino is that given by the *Dizionario letterario Bompiani, Opere*, vol. II, Milan, 1947, s.v. *Dialogo delle Carte Parlanti*. For confirmation of the

*Ragionamenti*, of which the first two parts are highly pornographic. Two slightly earlier mentions have been discovered by Franco Pratesi<sup>2</sup>: one, dated by him at around 1538, appears in the story *Sopra un caso accaduto in Prato* by Agnolo Firenzuola (1493-1543); another, from the decade 1530-1540, is in the *Capitolo in lodo delle zanzare* by the painter Angelo Bronzino (1503-1572). In these early references, neither the pack nor the game is yet called Minchiate, both are known instead as Germini. The cards are also the subject of an anonymous poem *Germini sopra Quaranta Meritrice della città di Fiorenza*, published in Florence in 1553, in which each of the forty trumps is associated with a named Florentine courtesan. The name "Germini" is obviously a corruption of Latin *Gemini* (the Twins), the subject of trump XXXV in the Minchiate pack, the highest of those showing signs of the Zodiac (and the highest numbered card). The alternative name "Minchiate" for the game had been introduced by the end of the XVI century: in Tuscan legislation specifying the tax stamps to be used, the cards are referred to as Germini from 1636 to 1682, but Minchiate from 1696 to 1780.<sup>3</sup> The word "Minchiate" doubtless has a connection with the verb *sminchiare* as used until the XIX century by Tarocchino players in Bologna to mean 'to play a high trump'. The latter word was also occasionally used in this sense by Minchiate players<sup>4</sup>, and the word "*sminchiate*" also appears in association with the game of Tarocchi in the commentary accompanying the poem *Capitolo del Gioco della Primiera*, by the Florentine poet Francesco Berni, published in 1526.

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date, see A. Milano, 'Two sheets of "Padovano" playing cards', *The Playing Card*, Vol. XIV, 1986, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> F. Pratesi, 'Italian Cards: New Discoveries', *The Playing Card*, Vol XVI, No. 3, 1988, pp. 78-83.

<sup>3</sup> A. Milano, 'Financial Legislation on Tuscan Playing-Cards ...', *The Playing Card*, Vol X, No. 3, 1982, pp. 102-106.

<sup>4</sup> For an example, see *Regole Generali del Giuoco delle Minchiate*, Florence, 1781 (and later editions), ch. XIII, p. 28.

It seems reasonable to date the invention of the Minchiate pack and the game played with it, both originally known as Germini, to the early XVI century, perhaps around 1530, since Berni's commentary refers to the game of Tarocchi, presumably played with 78 cards, but makes no mention of Germini. However, some doubt is cast on this dating by three XV-century references to Minchiate discovered by Franco Pratesi.<sup>5</sup> The first is in a letter dated 23 August 1466 from the Florentine poet Luigi Pulci (1432-1484) to Lorenzo the Magnificent. The second, of 1471, is a judgement in a case of blasphemy; and the third is a statute of the city of Florence in 1477 permitting "*il giuoco delle minchiate*" as well as "*il giuoco de triumphj*". It seems probable, however, that these three references, dating from over 100 years before the first known use of the name Minchiate for the game with 97 cards and about 60 years before the first clear reference to the 97-card pack, do not relate to the game with the expanded pack, but to some ancestor of it, presumably played with the 78-card pack. Perhaps the ancestral game went on being played with 78 cards for some time after the 97-card Germini pack had been invented, its name being transferred to the later game after it, or the use altogether of the 78-card pack, had died out in Florence.

When used as the name of the game, the word Minchiate is treated as a plural feminine noun; but in some parts of Italy it had an obscene meaning, as it still does today. It cannot have had such a meaning in Florence or Rome (at least before the XX century), in view of the many books in whose title it figured. Among regions of Italy where the word did have an obscene connotation were Sicily and Liguria, where there were many Sicilian immigrants; hence in Sicily and Genoa the game was known instead as Gallerini.

In the Minchiate pack, all but the top five trump cards bear Roman numerals, from I to XXXV, and these trumps are generally referred to by number,

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<sup>5</sup> F. Pratesi, 'Italian Cards: New Discoveries', *The Playing Card*, Vol XIX, No. 1, 1990, pp. 7-17 and 'De l'utilité des jurons pour l'histoire du minchiate', *L'As de Trèfle*, Vol 52, 1993, pp. 9-10.



both in literary sources and in descriptions of the game. The first description of the pack which attempts to identify the subjects of all the trumps is due to Romain Merlin in his *Origine des cartes à jouer* (Paris, 1869). Most of Merlin's identifications are quite obvious, and could not be quarrelled with. The exceptions are the II, III and IIII, identified by Merlin as the Grand Duke, the Western Emperor and the Eastern Emperor respectively. The II of the Minchiate trumps shows a crowned, seated and, as was remarked by Sylvia Mann, rather effeminate figure holding an orb and sceptre. The naming of this card by Merlin as the Grand Duke is anachronistic, since the Republic of Florence was converted into the Grand Duchy of Tuscany only in 1569, whereas the Minchiate pack was certainly in existence by 1543. Comparison of XVII-century Minchiate designs with those of a late XV-century uncoloured, uncut sheet in the Rosenwald collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, which contains the 21 trumps of a 78-card Tarot pack, strongly suggests that the Minchiate II and III are derived from the Empress (III) and Emperor (IIII) of the 78-card pack. The Minchiate IIII is seen to be a secularised version of the Pope (V). The fact that the Popess (II) from the 78 card pack was dropped when the 97-card pack was created is no doubt a tiny indication of the altered spirit of the age. In 1534 Alessandro Farnese assumed the Papal tiara as Paul III, the first of the Counter-Reformation Popes and the convenor in 1545 of the Council of Trent. What passed without offence in the ribald era of the Renaissance was no longer so readily acceptable, especially since it was Minchiate that, among the games of the Tarot family, became preeminently popular in Rome itself and throughout the Papal States.

In the following list of the Minchiate trumps, Italian names (other than *Bagatto*) are given only when they are actually known from some source as applied to Minchiate cards.

|       |  |           |   |
|-------|--|-----------|---|
| I     | <i>Papa uno</i> (Bagatto)                                    | XXI       | Water   |
| II    | <i>Papa due</i> (the Empress<br>or 'Grand Duke')             | XXII      | Earth   |
|       |  | XXIII     | Air   |
| III   | <i>Papa tre</i> (the Western Emperor)                        | XXIV      | Libra (the Scales)                              |
| IV    | <i>Papa quattro</i> (the Eastern Emperor)                    | XXV       | Virgo (the Virgin)                              |
| V     | <i>Papa cinque</i> (Love)                                    | XXVI      | Scorpio (the Scorpion)                          |
| VI    | Temperance   | XXVII     | Aries (the Ram)                                 |
| VII   | Fortitude  | XXVIII    | Capricornus                                     |
| VIII  | Justice  |           | (Capricorn or the Goat)                         |
| IX    | Wheel of Fortune   | XXIX      | Sagittarius (the Archer),<br>also called Chiron |
| X     | Chariot  |           |   |
| XI    | <i>il Gobbo</i> (the Hunchback)<br>or <i>il Tempo</i> (Time) | XXX       | Cancer (the Crab)                               |
|       |  | XXXI      | Pisces (the Fishes)                             |
| XII   | <i>l'Impiccato</i> (the Hanged Man)                          | XXXII     | Aquarius  |
| XIII  | Death  |           | (the Water-Carrier)                             |
| XIV   | <i>il Diavolo</i> or <i>il Demonio</i> (the Devil)           | XXXIII    | Leo (the Lion)                                  |
| XV    | <i>la Casa del Diavolo</i><br>(the House of the Devil)       | XXXIV     | Taurus (the Bull)                               |
|       |  | XXXV      | Gemini (the Twins)                              |
| XVI   | Hope   | (XXXVI)   | <i>la Stella</i> (the Star)                     |
| XVII  | Prudence   | (XXXVII)  | <i>la Luna</i> (the Moon)                       |
| XVIII | Faith  | (XXXVIII) | <i>il Sole</i> (the Sun)                        |
| XIX   | Charity  | (XXXIX)   | <i>il Mondo</i> (the World)                     |
| XX    | Fire   | (XL)      | <i>le Trombe</i> (the Trumpets)                 |

All the trumps from I to XXXV bear Roman numerals; on those peculiar to the Minchiate pack, from XVI to XXXV, these numerals are on scrolls at the top of each card, but on those from I to XV they are in the body of the card. This suggests that the original standard pattern for the Minchiate pack was simply adapted from the existing Florentine pattern for the 78-card Tarot pack by the insertion of the twenty new trump cards and the addition of the numeral I to the lowest trump, which must have lacked a number in the 78-card pack, as in the Tarocco bolognese. The top five trumps are called collectively *Arie*; these cards are unnumbered, but they are sometimes referred to by number given in brackets in the above table, both in literary references and in descriptions of the game.

The *Trombe* is the *Angelo* of other packs, and shows an angel blowing a double trumpet and hovering over a city; it usually bears the inscription 'FAMA VOLA'. The top eight trumps, from the *Trombe* down to the XXXIII (Leo) all have red backgrounds, and are known collectively as *rossi* (red cards). Trumps I to V inclusive are collectively known as *Papi* (Popes), even though they include no Pope, the original Pope card having been transformed into an Emperor (III). This recalls the use of the same term for the Papal and Imperial cards of the Tarocchino pack before 1725; it is quite likely that the term *Papi* was in more general use and was transferred to the Minchiate trumps, though it seems not to have been used before the XVII century. Trump I is obviously the Bagatto of other packs, but is never so called, being known simply as *l'Uno*, *il Papa uno* or, occasionally, *il Papino*.

What was almost certainly the original standard pattern for the Minchiate pack lasted until the 1890s, with hardly any change; several XVII-century examples survive. A second pattern was introduced in the middle of the XVIII century; it did not achieve the same popularity as its older rival, but survived it by a few decades. In both patterns, there are several peculiarities in the design of the suit cards. Although by the XVI century the use of straight Swords had become very rare on Italian cards, the Swords of the Minchiate pack are straight. In the suits of Cups and Coins, though not in Swords and Batons, the lowest court card is female and is called *Fantina* or *Fantiglia*. But since the Batons are of the usual smooth Italian type and the Aces have no dragons on them, it would be wholly misleading to say that the Minchiate pack employed the Portuguese version of the Latin suit-system. All the Kings and the Queens of Swords and Batons are seated, while the Queens of Cups and Coins stand. But the most remarkable feature of the court cards is the representation of the Cavalli. In Swords and Batons the usual mounted knights have become centaurs; in Cups and Coins they

have lost even this much of an equestrian character, and are half-human monsters, in Cups half-dragon, in Coins half-lion.

A comparison of the order of Minchiate trumps I to XV and the five *arie* with that of the trumps of the Bolognese pack shows the strong similarity between them. The three Virtues have been placed immediately above Love instead of one place higher, the positions of Fortitude and Justice exchanged, and the Chariot placed above the Wheel; but the salient features remain the same. This strongly suggests that the game of Tarot reached Florence from Bologna. This is confirmed by the *Fantine* in the suits of Cups and Coins, also a feature of Bolognese packs, both regular and Tarot. But it was already established in Florence by 1450, when the game of Trionfo (as Tarot was called in the XV century) occurs in a list of permitted games issued by the Commune of Florence.<sup>6</sup> The sheet in the Rosenwald collection, mentioned above, of which there is another example, very badly damaged, in the Spielkarten Museum in Leinfelden, represents a somewhat earlier version of the Tarot trumps than that on which the first standard pattern for Minchiate must have been based. Moreover, there are certain doubts about their order. On the bottom row, from left to right, are the Queens of Cups, Swords and Coins, followed by the Bagatto, Popess, Empress, Emperor and Pope, numbered I to V (so here the Bagatto *is* numbered). On the top row, from left to right, are Death, the Devil, the Tower (or House of the Devil), Star, Moon, Sun, World and Angel, all unnumbered. The middle row has Love (numbered VI), Temperance (VII), Justice (VIII), Fortitude (VIII), the

<sup>6</sup> See the articles cited in footnote 5. Similar edicts were issued in 1463 and 1477. The name of the game is usually given in the plural, as Trionfi; this has prompted Thierry Depaulis to think that the game referred to in the Florentine edict of 1450 is not Tarot but a game with trumps played with the ordinary pack, perhaps invented in Florence. There surely was such a game, probably ancestral to the French game of Triomphe, recorded as early as 1489; but although 1450 is a surprisingly early date for Tarot to have reached Florence, it is an even earlier date for a game with trumps, adapted from Tarot, to have existed. We may therefore agree with Pratesi against Depaulis that Tarot was indeed being referred to. Depaulis thinks that Minchiate, as referred to in the XV-century sources, was the name used in XV-century Florence for the game of Tarot in general; he therefore allows that that game was known in Florence by 1466.

Chariot (X), the Old Man (= the Hermit, numbered XII), the Hanged Man (definitely unnumbered) and the Wheel. Unfortunately, in both the Rosenwald and Leinfelden copies, the Wheel is too defective to tell whether it bore a numeral or not; if we suppose that it was numbered XI and was out of sequence on the sheet, we obtain an order exactly corresponding to that of the Tarocco bolognese, save that the three Virtues are placed below the Chariot instead of above it.

In the Rosenwald collection, this sheet is accompanied by two others showing, between them, all the suit cards other than Queens and 10s. Giuliana Algeri has expressed the view that the designs are not by the same hand as those of the sheet with Queens and trumps;<sup>7</sup> but, as she says, this does not rule out that all three were used to make a Tarot pack. While Florence continued to use cards with Italian suits for the regular pack, it must have been the case there as elsewhere that the designs used for the regular pack were also used in the Tarot pack. To make up a regular 52-card pack from the two sheets with suit cards, a sheet with (repetitions of) the four 10s would have been needed; to make up a Tarot pack from all three sheets, a sheet with (repetitions of) the four 10s, the Queen of Batons and the Fool. The Cavalli on the Rosenwald sheet are all centaurs; and the Ace of Coins has a hare above the Coin and a hound below it, as on this card in Bolognese packs up to the XVIII century.<sup>8</sup> The Swords are, however, curved. Florence was the first Italian domain to go over to the use of the French suit-system for the regular pack, which it had done by the middle of the XVI century.<sup>9</sup> Thereafter, Florence naturally became an exception to the

<sup>7</sup> See the catalogue *I Tarocchi*, Ferrara, 1987, p. 88, no. 17.

<sup>8</sup> See the illustration of this card in R. Ettinghausen, 'Further Comments on Mamluk Playing Cards' in *Gatherings in Honor of Dorothy E. Miner*, ed. U. E. McCracken *et al.*, Baltimore, 1974, fig. 1, p. 72.

<sup>9</sup> See A. Milano, 'Two sheets of "Padovano" playing cards', *The Playing Card*, Vol. XIV, 1986, pp. 61-7. Milano dates these sheets of French-suited cards to between 1550 and 1580. Padovano was a famous cardmaker who figures as a character in Aretino's *Le carte parlanti*; Milano cites several letters written by Aretino to Padovano between 1541 and 1553 and addressed to him in Florence.

general rule, exemplified in Bologna, Milan and Rome, that in Italy the same designs were used for the regular pack and for the cards of the four suits, other than the Queens, in the Tarot pack.

In 1995 Mr. Han Janssen discovered in a small private museum in Assisi a pack – not just uncut sheets – of cards closely similar to the two Rosenwald sheets of suit cards.<sup>10</sup> This pack is now in the private collection of Signor Giuliano Crippa in Milan. The designs correspond very exactly to those of the Rosenwald sheets, although small details show that they were not printed from the same wood blocks. This confirms the assumption that we have here the Florentine standard pattern of the time. Puzzlingly, the pack, otherwise complete, corresponds to the Rosenwald sheets to the extent of lacking 10s. The absence of 10s from uncut sheets of 24 cards each has no significance: as noted in footnote 4 to Chapter 10, a Ferrarese sheet consisting solely of 10s shows a natural solution to the problem. Nevertheless a pack of separate cards without 10s gives rise to perplexity. The only reference known to a pack without 10s being used in Italy comes from the *Diario ferrarese*, running from 1471 to 1494, of the notary and chronicler Ugo Caleffini, in which he speaks of the game of Ronfa as of Neapolitan origin and as played in Ferrara in about 1475 with a pack having twelve cards in each suit, that is, without 10s;<sup>11</sup> presumably this is due to Spanish influence. With this exception, Italian cardmakers and players do not appear to have taken greatly to using 48-card packs, unlike their counterparts in Spain and

<sup>10</sup> See *The Playing-Card World*, no. 79, February 1995.

<sup>11</sup> Edited by Giuseppe Pardi, *Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Emilia e la Romagna. Serie Monumenti*, Vol. I, 1938, Ferrara; see pp. 95-6. Caleffini's words are: "... se uxa dodice per cadauna sorte: cioè 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, poi il soto, poi uno cavalo, poi lo Re." The term *soto*, rather than *fante*, indicates a Spanish origin for the game. On the other hand, Sperone Speroni (1500-1588), in his brief *Trattatello del Gioco* (see his *Opere*, Vol. V, Venice 1740, pp. 441-2) mentions Trappola, as being played with a pack omitting the 3, 4, 5 and 6 of each suit, and Primiera, as being played with one omitting the 2, 3 and 4 of each suit, and then says vaguely that for some other games other cards are omitted, but says nothing about any games with 48 cards, without the 10s.

Germany. Nevertheless, Caleffini's testimony suffices to make it probable that the pack from Assisi was in origin one of only 48 cards. This is confirmed by a pack of 48 cards, evidently complete but lacking 10s, of the same pattern as the Rosenwald/Assisi cards, but with similar but by no means identical designs, in the collection of Signor Francesco Allegri of Parma.

Unlike the parent game played with the 78-card pack, which suffered a decline in the later XVII century, Minchiate appears to have enjoyed a steady popularity that reached its zenith in the XVIII century. It figures in *La Sfinge*, a collection of riddles in verse by the Florentine poet Antonio Malatesti (1610-1672) of which parts 1 and 2 were published in 1640 and 1643; the third section of the posthumous Part 3, published in 1683, was '*Quadernari delle Minchiate*', a set of sixty-six quatrains each devoted to one of the principal cards of the Minchiate pack. Malatesti's friend, the Florentine painter and poet Lorenzo Lippi (1606-1665), composed a long poem, *Il Malmantile Racquistato*, of which two stanzas (61 and 62 of the 8th canto) related to Minchiate. The first edition of this poem appeared posthumously in 1676, under the anagrammatic pseudonym Perlone Zipoli, with a commentary by his friend Paolo Minucci, using the pseudonym Puccio Lamoni: this commentary contains the first detailed description of the game of Minchiate. Minucci's notes were expanded by Biscioni, with further remarks on Minchiate games, for a new edition of 1731. These poems not only give useful detailed information, but also serve to show that, at least in Florence, the game continued to be well known throughout the XVII century. Minucci remarks that although it is well known in Tuscany, elsewhere it is not much played, or at any rate is played under different rules; he specifically mentions Liguria as a region in which it is played differently, under the name Gallerini.

There were many XVIII-century accounts of the game. The first, after Minucci, was Luigi Bernardi's *Regole Generali del nobilissimo gioco delle*

*Minchiate*, published in Rome in 1728 and reissued there in 1742 and 1773. F.S. Brunetti's *Giocchi delle Minchiate, Ombre, Scacchi ed altri d'ingegno*, in which the rules of the games are interlarded with some tiresome allegorical matter, was also published in Rome, in 1747. An anonymous account in *terza rima*, *Il Giuoco delle Minchiate: Capitolo*, appeared in Leghorn in 1752, and was republished in Florence in 1827. Minchiate was included in Raffaelle Bisteghi's card-game book, *Il Giuoco Pratico*, which also contained the first printed account of Tarocchino, published in Bologna in 1753 and reissued there in 1754, 1760, 1774, 1785 and 1820, and in Milan in 1819. The first account to be published in Florence was another anonymous one in *terza rima*, the *Regole Generali delle Minchiate* of 1777; this was followed in 1781 by the prose account *Regole Generali del Giuoco delle Minchiate* (RGGM), reprinted in 1790, 1807, 1820 (with a substantial addition) and 1852. It is evident that the game was highly regarded throughout the XVIII century, not only on Florence but also in Rome<sup>12</sup>, and it maintained its status into the early XIX century<sup>13</sup>. The latest work to deal with Minchiate was the *Precetti al Giuocatore in Conversazione* (Milan, 1868); but as this borrowed heavily from *Il Giuoco Pratico*, it cannot be considered good evidence that the game still flourished at that date.

<sup>12</sup> In lettre XLV, written in 1739-40, of the *Lettres d'Italie du Président de Brosses* (ed. F. D'Agay, Paris, vol. II, 1986), Charles de Brosses devoted more than two pages to the game of Minchiate as played at Rome, which he much admired and which he sketchily described. He believed it to have been invented in Siena by Michelangelo, and, on the basis of a supposed resemblance of the figure on trump IV to Innocent X, thought it could have been introduced into Rome only in the reign of that Pope (1644-1655). Joseph Baretti, in his *Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy* (London, 1768), speaks of both Tarocco and Minchiate, the former as played in Piedmont and Lombardy, the latter 'all over Tuscany and the Pope's dominions' (vol. II, ch. 33, pp. 219-21). In de La Lande's *Voyage d'un François en Italie fait dans les années 1765 et 1766* (Venice, 1769), a travel-book in eight volumes, Minchiate is spoken of at length (vol. V, pp. 157-60) as a game much played in Italy: 'tout le monde l'aime à Rome' ('everybody in Rome is fond of it').

<sup>13</sup> Robert Smith testified in a letter to the Society of Antiquaries of November 1803 (published in *Archaeologia*, vol. xv, 1806, pp. 140-4) that it was held in high esteem among the fashionable circles in Tuscany. Smith presented the Society with a Minchiate pack and a copy of the 1781 edition of RGGM which are still to be seen at the Society's rooms in Burlington House.



Tarocchino and Minchiate are alike in their histories in that both games, probably invented at about the same time, retained their popularity though the XVII century, a time when the 78-card game was fading from general esteem, and survived intact to participate in the widespread enthusiasm for Tarot games in the XVIII century. Their histories differ in that, while Tarocchino remained confined to the region of its origin and still flourishes there, Minchiate became known in many parts of Italy, but has unfortunately not survived. We know from the notes on games by the great compiler of facts about Sicilian society, the marchese di Villabianca (1720-1802), that the game was introduced from Rome into Sicily in 1663, and there known under the name Gallerini ('Minchiate' having for Sicilians an offensive sound); and that it was played in Sicily in a somewhat different manner from that followed in Florence and Rome. At around the same time there was considerable immigration to Genoa from southern Italy and Sicily, and the use there of the name 'Gallerini' indicates that it was probably by this route rather than directly from Florence that the game was brought to Genoa, and there played in the Sicilian rather than the Florentine manner. It died out in Sicily in the course of the XVIII century, but it is in Genoa that it seems to have survived longest. In Florence, its decline must have begun in the second half of the XIX century: though packs were still being made there in the 1890s, the game was probably extinct soon after the end of that century; in Rome, no doubt considerably earlier. The card-making firm of Solesio, in Genoa, on the other hand, was still producing Minchiate packs using the later standard pattern, in the 1920s and 30s; in 1978 Stanley Gibbons sold a Solesio pack with an Italian tax stamp dated 1929, and in the 1930s Mr Martin Drayson of New York imported some Solesio packs for sale to playing-card collectors. We should probably date the final demise of the game, in its Ligurian form, at around 1935.

According to Minucci, the game was played in Liguria in a manner differing considerably from that prevalent in Florence, which supports our

hypothesis that it was there played in the Sicilian mode. Unfortunately, all the accounts we have come either from Tuscany or from Rome, with the exception of *Il Giuoco Pratico*, which was plainly describing the Florentine/Roman form; there is no hint that the manner of play differed between Rome and Florence. We have no direct indication how the game was played in Genoa; but Villabianca's notes give hints about the Sicilian manner of play, both of it and of ordinary Tarot, sometimes known in Sicily as 'piccoli Gallerini'.<sup>14</sup> One interesting curiosity is the existence of Genoese packs with 98 cards. The extra card looks like an additional high trump: it is unnumbered, has a red background like the five *Arie*, and depicts a naked female figure in a running posture, with her foot on the arc of a wheel. It and she are enclosed within a circle, which is supported by two male figures rising from the ground. We know of two examples of this 98-card pack: one, made by Solesio and bearing a tax stamp used between 1896 and 1913, is in the collection of Mr David Temperley; the other, made in Genoa in the second quarter of the XIX century, is in the Spielkarten Museum at Leinfelden. Other Genoese packs, including the later Solesio packs, have only the usual 97 cards. However, there is an interesting correlation with a remark of Villabianca on the Sicilian game of Gallerini: he gives no details of the rules but asserts that the pack consists of 98 cards, including 42 trumps. If the *Matto* is counted as a trump, this could be a description of the same type of pack as the two Genoese examples described above, in which case it seems that some variation of the game using 98 cards was played both in Sicily and in Genoa. Unfortunately, we have no information about how this variation might have been played. Since it is unlikely that there is anyone still living who remembers it, this may for ever be a gap in our knowledge of the history of Tarot games.

Not only did Minchiate spread from Florence to other parts of Italy, to Rome and the Papal States, to Sicily and to Liguria: it also became known abroad.

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<sup>14</sup> These will be indicated in Chapter 13.

In France, Nicholas de Poilly produced a Minchiate pack with highly non-standard designs in 1730, and in 1775 an instruction booklet *Regles du Jeu des Minquiattes* was printed. At least two descriptions of the game were published in German. One such was included in the second edition of *Die Kunst, die Welt erlaubt mitzunehmen in den verschiedenen Arten der Spiele* (Nuremberg, 1769); this was a translation of that given in *Il Giuoco Pratico*. A separate account, which appears to be independent, was published in Dresden in 1798 under the title *Regeln des Minchiatta-Spiels* (RMS); this is a very careful description, more explicit than any of the Italian ones and painstaking in its reproduction of the Italian terminology, which, however, it sometimes misspells. It is unlikely, though, that the vogue for Minchiate outside Italy was ever very widespread.

The game of Minchiate is generically similar to that of Tarocchino. In both cases, the principal form is a four-handed game with fixed partnerships. In Minchiate, as in Tarocchino, there are scores for special combinations of cards, both when held in the hand of one player and declared at the beginning of play, and also when contained among the cards won in tricks by a pair of partners; and, as in Tarocchino, these scores swamp the points for individual cards won in tricks. Both games have a bonus for winning the last trick; and neither has any idea of a special bonus for winning it with the trump I. In detail, however, the two games are very different. Not only are the scoring combinations wholly dissimilar, but the selection of counting cards in Minchiate differs radically from that in any other Tarot game: exactly half of the forty trumps are counting cards, while, of the court cards, only the Kings retain their point-values. The various printed descriptions of the game agree extremely closely, so that, while we can probably not recover in detail the distinct mode of play observed in Liguria, we have a very clear idea how it was played in Florence and Rome from, say, 1675 onwards.

## 12.1 Minchiate with partners

### *Terminology*

Trumps are called *tarocchi*. Counting cards are called *carte di conto*, and trumps which are counting cards *tarocchi nobili*. Trumps which are not counting cards are called *tarocchi ignobili*, and empty suit cards are called *cartiglie* or *cartaccie*. The Fool is called *il Matto*: the three highest court cards in each suit are called *Re*, *Regina* and *Cavallo*; the lowest court card in Swords and Batons is called *Fante* and in Cups and Coins *Fantina* or *Fantiglia*. As already mentioned, the top five trumps are called *Arie* and the lowest five trumps, from I to V, are called *Papi*.<sup>15</sup> The XXXI to XXXV are called *sopratrenti*; likewise the XXI to XXIX are sometimes called *sopraventi* and the XI to XIX *sottoventi*. The trumps from XXXIII upwards, particularly the XXXIII, XXXIV and XXXV, are called *rossi*, from their red backgrounds. Malatesti gives the name *salamandre* for the XVI to XIX (the four additional virtues), while RMS says that they are called *preghe* (in the *Germini sopra Quaranta Meritrice*, they are assigned to four procuresses or *ruffiane*); but these cards have no special significance in the game. The special scoring combinations of cards are called *versicole*, *verzicole* or *verzigole*; the stock of undealt cards is called *la Fola* or *la Folla*. Other special terms will be mentioned as they become relevant.

### *Rank and values of the cards*

The highest trumps are the five *Arie*, which are, in descending order, the *Trombe*, *Mondo*, *Sole*, *Luna*, and *Stella*. Below them come the numbered trumps in sequence down from the XXXV to the *Uno* (I). The *Matto* has no trick-taking power and serves as Excuse. In the suits, the cards rank in their original order. The counting cards are the four Kings, the *Matto*, the five *Papi* from I to V, the X,

<sup>15</sup> Trumps VI to IX or even XII are also sometimes called *Papi*, *Papetti* or *tarocchini*, but these usages are rare, unnecessary and confusing.

the XIII, the XX, the XXVIII and the eleven highest trumps from the XXX to the *Trombe* inclusive. Their values are as follows:

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| The <i>Arie</i> : <i>Trombe</i> , <i>Mondo</i> , <i>Sole</i> , <i>Luna</i> , <i>Stella</i> | 10 points each |
| Trumps from XXXV to XXX inclusive  | 5 points each  |
| Trumps XXVIII, XX, XIII and X  | 5 points each  |
| The <i>Papi</i> from V to II inclusive   | 3 points each  |
| The <i>Uno</i> (I)   | 5 points       |
| The <i>Matto</i>   | 5 points       |
| The Kings  | 5 points each  |

Thus the counting cards are worth 5 points each with the exception of the *Arie* (10 points) and the *Papi* from II to V (3 points). In addition, there are 10 points for winning the last trick.

#### *Deal and discard*

There are four players, in fixed partnerships of two each, partners facing each other across the table. Four hands constitute a *girata* (round), in the course of which each player deals once, and it is usual to play a *girone*, which is a set of three *girate*, one with each possible combination of partners. Deal and play are counter-clockwise. Twenty-one cards are dealt to each player, leaving in principle a stock of thirteen undealt cards, which is called the *Fola*. However, the deal incorporates a process by which the dealer and the opponent to his left extract any counting cards from the *Fola*, discarding empty cards in their place. This ensures that all the counting cards are in play.

After having shuffled the pack, the dealer presents it to the player on his left to cut. RMS says that, before he does so, the dealer looks at the bottom of the pack, and, if the bottom card is a counting card, removes it to the middle of the pack, and repeats this operation until the bottom card is an empty card. No Italian source mentions this detail, which is designed to prevent the player who cuts doing so in such a way as to ensure that his partner gets the bottom card when it is a good one.

The player on the dealer's left lifts a section of the pack from the top in the usual way (he must leave at least three cards); but, instead of placing this top

section face down on the table, he turns it over so as to expose its bottom card. If this card is a counting card, or any *sopraventi* (trump higher than the XX) even if not a counting card, he takes it and lays it face up in front of him. If the next card is a counting card or a *sopraventi*, he takes it in the same way, and continues to take cards until he reaches one that is neither a counting card nor a *sopraventi*. RMS requires him to stop when he has taken thirteen cards (if he should be so lucky), even if the next card is a counting card or a *sopraventi*; RGGM, on the other hand, says expressly that he should not stop, but should continue until he reaches an empty card. To take counting cards and *sopraventi* from the pack in this way is called to rob (*rubare*) the pack. The opponents of the dealer immediately score the values in points of all the counting cards which the player on the dealer's left robs.

The player on the dealer's left now puts the remainder of the top section of the pack face down on the table; the dealer places the bottom section on top of it, and deals a batch of ten cards to each player, beginning with the player on his right. He then deals a batch of eleven cards to each player, in each case exposing the eleventh card. If the card thus exposed is a counting card, the side concerned immediately scores its value.

The dealer counts the stock of undealt cards, which is known as the *Fola*, to make sure he has dealt correctly: it should consist of thirteen cards less any that have been robbed by the player to his left. The dealer now robs the pack in his turn. He turns up the top card of the *Fola*: if it is a counting card or a *sopraventi* he takes it, placing it face up on the table in front of him. In this case, he then turns up the next card of the *Fola*, and, if it is a counting card or a *sopraventi*, takes it in the same way, continuing until he reaches a card that is neither a counting card nor a *sopraventi*. The dealer's side scores the value of any counting card robbed by the dealer in this way. (It is important that the dealer should rob cards from the *top* of the *Fola*, rather than exposing the bottom card, which will necessarily be an empty card.) The dealer now looks through the

remaining cards of the *Fola*, and if there are any counting cards there, he extracts them and lays them face up on the table in front of him. They belong to the dealer, but his side does not score any points for them. Bernardi explicitly states that the dealer must also extract the XXIX from the *Fola* if it is present, since although it is not a counting card, it can be used in a *versicola* (see below). He mentions with disapproval an alternative rule whereby the dealer only extracts the XXIX if it can be used immediately to form a *versicola* in the dealer's hand. To extract counting cards from the *Fola* in this way is called *pigliare*; note that, unlike the case of robbing the pack, the dealer does not extract *sopraventi* from XXI to XXVII from the *Fola*.

The dealer now hands what remains of the *Fola* to his partner. The partner looks at it, and sorts it into suits: he places the trumps face down in a pile in front of him, but the suit cards, arranged in their different suits, face up beside the trumps; he also announces how many cards of each suit there are in the *Fola*.<sup>16</sup> (He does not announce the number of trumps, but this is deducible by subtraction.) In the meantime, each player picks up his hand, including the exposed card, and the dealer and the player on his left pick up any cards they have robbed from the pack or extracted from the *Fola*. If the dealer or the player on his left have robbed or extracted cards, they will now have more than twenty-one cards in hand, and they must each discard face down in front of them as many

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<sup>16</sup> RMS states various conventions governing the announcement by the dealer's partner or the dealer himself of the numbers of cards in the different suits. The suits containing more cards are mentioned first, e.g. 'Four Cups, three Coins, one Sword, without Batons'. If there are equal numbers of cards in two or more suits, this is expressed by '*per sorte*' (of each kind), leaving those suits unnamed. Thus 'Four Coins, two of each' means 'Four Coins, two Swords, two Batons, two Cups'; 'Four Coins, two of each, without Batons' means 'Four Coins, two Swords, two Cups, no Batons'; 'Four of each, two Cups, one Baton' means 'Four Swords, four Coins, two Cups, one Baton'. Swords and Batons can be referred to collectively as *lunghi* (long), and Cups and Coins as *rotondi* (round); RMS gives *rosse* (red) in place of *rotondi*, but this is a mistake. Hence 'Three round, two long' means 'Three Cups, three Coins, two Swords, two Batons'. If there are, respectively, one, two, three and four cards of the different suits, the suits are given, without numerals, in ascending order, according to the number of cards in each: thus 'Cups, Swords, Coins, Batons' means 'One Cup, two Swords, three Coins, four Batons'.

cards as necessary to reduce their hands to twenty-one cards. They may not discard counting cards, but may discard any other cards, including trumps.

It will be remembered that, according to RGGM, the player to the dealer's left may, if he is lucky enough, rob more than thirteen cards. In this case, the dealer will not be able to deal himself a full complement of eleven cards on the second round of the deal. Instead, he deals himself all the remaining cards, exposing the last one, and then waits for the player to his left to discard. This player sets thirteen discarded cards face down in front of him, and gives the other cards that he discards, which will necessarily be empty cards, to the dealer to make up his hand.

Both Brunetti and Bernardi remark that it was formerly the rule that, if the dealer was unable either to rob or to extract any cards from the *Fola*, he had to pay a penalty of 1 *resto* or game point, equivalent to 60 card points; in the partnership game, his side had to pay the opposing side. However, the rule was abandoned as being too brutal.

As soon as the dealer and the player to his left have made their discards, the player to the dealer's right leads to the first trick. The other players do not immediately play to the trick, however: there is first a pause for declarations.

### *Declarations*

As soon as the player to the dealer's right has led the first card, each player in turn, beginning with the one on the dealer's right, announces any of the special combinations of cards, called *versicole*, he has in his hand, and shows them to the other players. There are two kinds of *versicole*, regular and irregular. A regular *versicola* consists of three or more trumps in strict consecutive sequence. Not every trump can form part of a regular *versicola*, but only the *Papi* from I to V and the trumps from the XXVIII up to the *Trombe* inclusive. There are names for various kinds of regular *versicola*, although the distinctions between the different types in no way affect the rules of the game. A *versicola* consisting of three or more *Papi* is of course called a *versicola di Papi*; a *versicola* containing



numbered cards from the XXVIII up is called a *versicola di tarocchi*; one containing one or more *Arie* is called a *versicola d'Arie*; one containing the XXX is called a *versicola di trenti*; one starting with the XXXI or XXXII a *versicola di sopratrenti*; and one consisting of the XXXIII, XXXIV and XXXV a *versicola di rossi*. The irregular *versicole* are as follows:

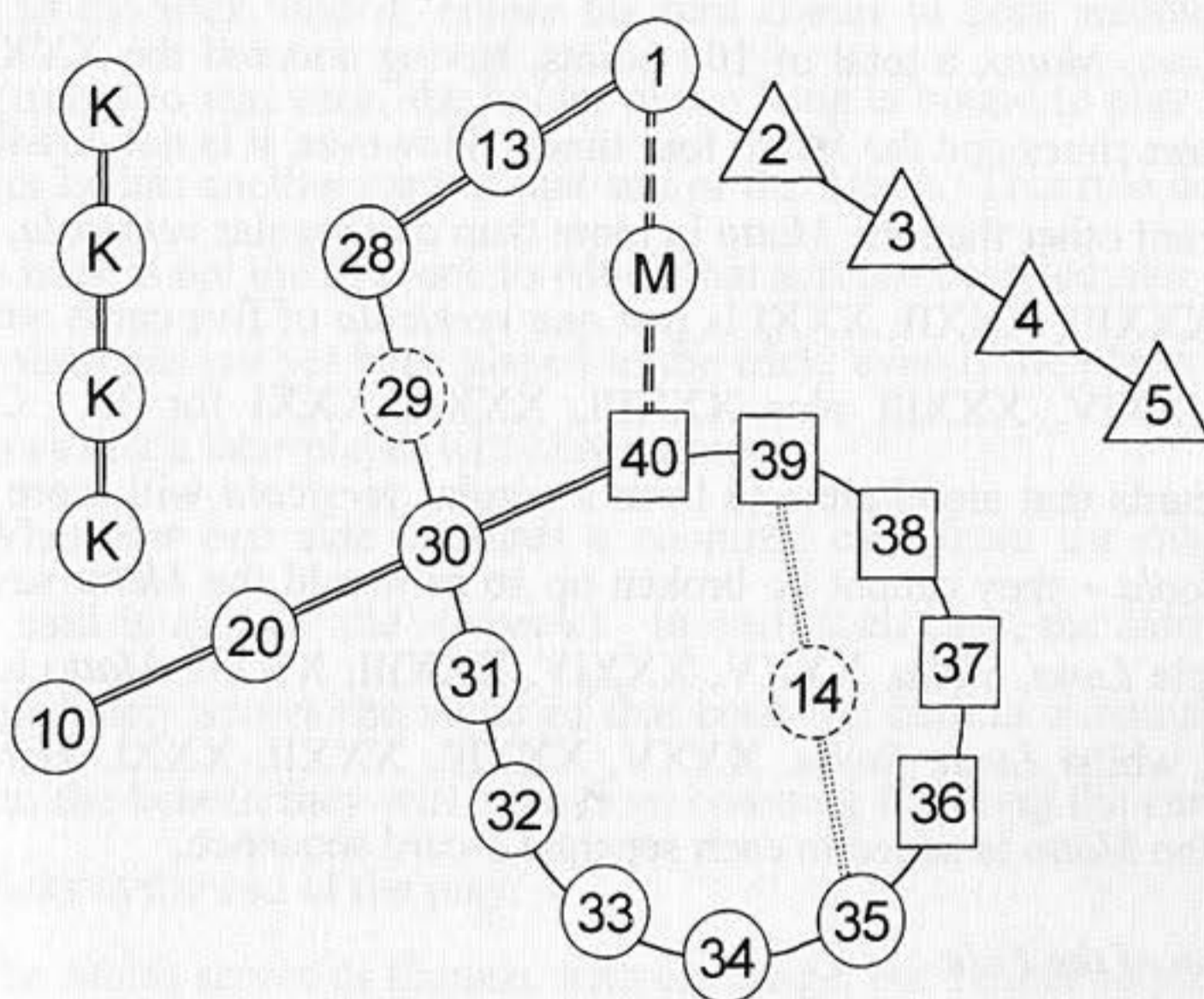
- (a) *Uno*, *Trombe* and *Matto* (called *versicola del Matto*)
- (b) *Uno*, XIII and XXVIII (called *versicola del Tredici*);
- (c) the X, XX and XXX, or the XX, XXX and *Trombe*, or the X, XX, XXX and *Trombe* (any of which is called a *versicola delle diecine*);
- (d) any three, or all four, Kings (a *versicola dei Regi*).

The player who has the *Matto* cannot use it as a wild card, to substitute for a card missing from a *versicola*; but he can add it on to every *versicola* that he has, save, of course, the *versicola del Matto*, of which it is already an integral part.

With one exception, the value of any *versicola* is simply the sum total of the values of the cards it contains, considered as counting cards, including 5 points for the *Matto* if it is annexed to the *versicola*. Thus a *versicola* consisting of the *Uno*, *Papa* II and *Papa* III is worth 11 points, one comprising the X, XX and XXX 15 points, and one made up of the XXXIV, XXXV, *Stella* and *Luna* 30 points. The exception is a *versicola* containing the XXIX, the only non-counting card that can form part of a regular *versicola*; in such a *versicola*, the XXIX counts 5 points, so that for example the XXVIII, XXIX, XXX and XXXI together count 20 points. Each side records the values of the *versicole* declared by either partner (see under scoring).

Bernardi mentions that some players recognise an additional irregular *versicola*, consisting of the XIV (the Devil), the XXXV (the Twins) and the *Mondo*; this is called the *Demonio*, *Mondo e Carne* (the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, the Twins being taken to represent the Flesh). It is worth 20 points, the XIV being treated as worth 5 points when included in this *versicola*. None of the

other sources recognises this *versicola* and Bernardi clearly does not regard it as part of the standard partnership game.



| Key: |                     |  |                            |
|------|---------------------|--|----------------------------|
|      | regular versicola   |  | 10-point card              |
|      | irregular versicola |  | 5-point card               |
|      | variant versicola   |  | 3-point card               |
|      |                     |  | 5 points in versicola only |

The values of the counting cards and the possible *versicole* are summarised in the above diagram. For convenience, the trumps are identified by Arabic numbers, the Kings are shown as 'K' and the *Matto* as 'M'. A *versicola* consists of three or more adjacent cards along a marked line, the lines drawn in different styles being considered separate.

It is possible to use a single counting card in several irregular *versicole* and one regular *versicola* at the same time. For example a player who has *Trombe*, *Mondo*, *Sole*, XXXII, XXXI, XXX, XX, *Uno*, *Matto*, will score 35 for

the regular *versicola* *Trombe*, *Mondo*, *Sole*, *Matto*, 20 for the XXXII, XXXI, XXX, *Matto*, 25 for the irregular *versicola* *Trombe*, XXX, XX, *Matto*, and 20 for *Trombe*, *Uno*, *Matto*, a total of 100 points, having counted the XXX twice, the *Trombe* three times and the *Matto* four times. However, it is not possible to use a counting card other than the *Matto* in more than one regular *versicola*, so XXXV, XXXIV, XXXIII, XXXII, XXXI is just one *versicola* of five cards worth 25, not XXXV, XXXIV, XXXIII plus XXXIII, XXXII, XXXI for 30. Consecutive counting cards that are eligible to form a regular *versicola* will score as a single long *versicola* – they cannot be broken up so as to add the *Matto* several times. For example *Luna*, *Stella*, XXXV, XXXIV, XXXIII, XXXII, *Matto* is worth just 45 points, whilst *Luna*, *Stella*, XXXV, XXXIII, XXXII, XXXI, *Matto* is worth 50, since the *Matto* is added to each separate 3-card sequence.

#### *Completion of the Fola*

When the declarations are completed, and before play to the first trick is resumed, the dealer and the player to his left turn over the cards they discarded for the other players to see, and pass them to the dealer's partner, who announces which cards each of them has discarded, and then sets the discarded cards, according to their suits, with the cards of the *Fola*; in this way he reconstitutes a full *Fola* of thirteen cards. He again announces how many cards of each of the plain suits belong to this reconstituted *Fola* (the number of trumps again follows by subtraction). Having done this, he passes the *Fola* to the dealer, who places it face down beside him. Throughout the play, the dealer may himself look at the *Fola* at any time, and at any player's request must announce again how many cards of each suit it contains. It is also permitted for any player, at any time, to look at the tricks that his side has won.

#### *Play*

When the dealer has placed the *Fola* beside him, play to the first trick is resumed, and the hands are played out in twenty-one tricks. The usual rules of play apply,

except that there is a special rule governing the first trick to be played in any one of the four plain suits. If the player who holds the King of that suit is not the one who led to the trick, and if, before his turn comes to play, another player has played a trump to that trick, the holder of the King is bound to play it, regardless of whether he has another card of that suit or the *Matto*. This rule does not apply when the trick is not the first one to which that suit has been led; nor does it apply when a trump has not yet been played to the trick, even if the player who has the King knows that a later player will play a trump.

Whenever one side captures a counting card from the other side, that counting card is said to 'die' (*morire*). In each such case, the side winning the trick immediately scores the value of that counting card as a bonus. This is in addition to the benefit they will have from counting it among the cards they have won in tricks at the end of the play.

The *Matto* serves as Excuse, with exchange, but cannot be played in place of a King in the special case mentioned above. If the side of the player of the *Matto* has not yet won a trick containing an empty card, they may wait and give a card in exchange at the end of the hand. If at the end of the hand, they have won only counting cards in their tricks, they must give a counting card of their choice in exchange for the *Matto* and that counting card is regarded as dying, so that the opponents score its value as a bonus, and also add it to their tricks. If the side which had the *Matto* makes no tricks at all, then the *Matto* itself is surrendered and dies, giving the bonus 5 points for the death, and allowing the opponents to add the *Matto* to the cards in their tricks, annexing it to every *versicola*. It does not seem to be envisaged that a player will ever lead the *Matto* to a trick.

RMS mentions a rule otherwise cited only by Brunetti and Bernardi, that a player who has no more trumps left in his hand is allowed to 'drop' (*cascare*) his cards: he lays them face up on the table, is not permitted to win another trick, and takes no more part in the play; in each subsequent trick, the player who wins it takes a suitable card from the exposed hand to complete the trick. It is plainly

inadvisable to take advantage of this rule if one has a King or the *Matto* still in one's hand, but when one has no further chance of winning a trick, it may be helpful to one's partner thus to let him know how matters stand.

### Scoring

There are several possibilities of gaining points before the end of the hand: for a counting card exposed as the last card dealt to either of the partners; for counting cards robbed from the pack; for *versicole* declared during the first trick; or for causing the deaths of the opponents' counting cards (i.e. capturing them). The amounts scored in any of these ways during the hand are recorded as the amount by which one side is ahead of the other. So at any stage, one side has a positive score and the other a zero score; points gained by the side currently behind the other are subtracted from the score of the leading side. For example, the third player (left of the dealer) robs the III, so his side (side A) marks 3 points. The first player's exposed card in the deal is the XIII, so side A changes its running total to 8 points. Now the dealer robs the XX, so side A reduces its total to 3 points again. The third player declares a *versicola* of the I, II and III (11 points), and side A's score is raised to 14 points; but the dealer declares the XX, XXX and *Trombe* (20 points), so side A's score is deleted and side B scores 6 points. In the play, side A captures the XXVIII, reducing side B's score to 1 point; later, side A captures the *Luna*, wiping out side B's score and marking 9 points.

At the end of the play, each side reckons up its point-total, of which there are five possible constituents. First there are the points already gained by one of the two sides during the hand, as just explained. Secondly, there are 10 points for the side winning the last trick. Thirdly, the side that has won more than 42 cards altogether in the tricks scores as many points as it has cards in excess of 42 (42 being half of the total number of cards in play). Fourthly, each side scores points for all the counting cards it has won in tricks, according to their point-values: the counting cards are counted separately, and do not have to be accompanied by

empty cards.<sup>17</sup> Finally, each side scores for each *versicola* contained in the cards it has won in tricks; the side that has the *Matto* adds it to every *versicola* (save, of course, the *versicola del Matto*).

The winning side is obviously that with the higher point-total, and payment is made in accordance with the difference between the totals of the winning and losing sides. Payment is made in game points called *resti*, one *resto* for every 60 points or part of 60 points: thus if the difference is between 1 and 60 points inclusive, 1 *resto* is paid, if between 61 and 120 points inclusive, 2 *resti* are paid, and so on.

If, however, at any stage during the play of the hand one side attains a score of 60 points or more, the other side immediately pays them 1 *resto*, and the 60 points are deducted from their score and, as having already been paid for, do not go towards their final point-total. This may be to their disadvantage. Suppose for example that side A, having robbed several counting cards and declared several *versicole*, attains a score of 63 points during the course of the hand. Side B pays 1 *resto* to side A, and side A's score is reduced to 3 points. Later in the hand, side B is more fortunate, and finishes up with a point-total 9 points higher than that of A. A has now to pay B 1 *resto*, and the hand is in effect a draw. If, however, A had not been paid in the middle of the hand, but had been allowed to keep all 63 points, they would have finished with a point-total 51 points higher than that of B, and would have received a (net) payment of 1 *resto*.

RMS states that if one side wins all the tricks, their payment in *resti* for the final score is doubled, but not any *resti* they may have received during the hand. This privilege is not mentioned in any of the Italian sources. The later

<sup>17</sup> It was conventional to arrange the cards, when counting them, in packets (*mazzetti*) of three, with a counting card on top, and two non-counting cards, say a *tarocco ignobile* and a *cartaccia*, underneath: 14 such packets made up 42 cards. This practice had, however, no actual significance for the counting: its purpose was only to facilitate the subsequent shuffling of the pack by preventing all the counting cards from being grouped together. In fact, the net effect of awarding the side with more cards 1 point for each card above 42 is mathematically equivalent to counting the cards not in threes but in twos, and using the 'original method' whereby the point for each pair of cards is added to the values of the counting cards.

editions of RGGM (1820 and 1852) state that the overall winners of each *girata* (round of four hands with the same partners) receive an additional bonus of 3 *resti*.

*Tactics, and terms relating to the play*

The object of the play is, of course, to save one's own counting cards, help one's partner save his and capture those of the opponents, and particularly those forming *versicole*. There are certain cards which are of special importance, and are called *carte gelose* (jealous cards). These are: the *Uno*, because it forms part of three different *versicole*; the *Papa III*, because without it one cannot form a *versicola* of *Papi*; the *XX*, because without it one cannot form a *versicola delle diecine*; the *XXX*, for the same reason, and because it may also belong to a regular *versicola*; and the *Sole*, without which one cannot form a *versicola* composed entirely of *Arie*. The *XIII* and the *XXVIII* may to a lesser degree be considered *carte gelose*. Cards the loss of which will destroy a potential *versicola* (particularly the middle card of a regular *versicola* such as *XXXI*, *XXXII* and *XXXIII*) are also to be treated as *carte gelose*. Except when one is forced to do so, one should never play a *carta gelosa* to a trick one cannot be sure of.

If a player holds a King of a suit in which he fears that an opponent may be void, he can avert the risk of having to sacrifice the King on the first round of the suit, under the special rule requiring him to play it if the trick has been trumped, by first leading a low card of the suit himself. Leading a low card from a suit in which one has the King in this way is called to 'hang' (*impiccare*), or, less frequently, to 'smother' (*affogare*), the King. If the holder of the King has length in the suit – five or six cards – it may be good to continue to lead it. If partner becomes void before the King holder's left hand opponent, it may then be possible to save the King by leading it, so that partner can overtrump the King holder's right hand opponent. Alternatively, if one is short in trumps, it may be

possible to exhaust both opponents' holdings in the suit, and keep the King to throw on a winning trump played by partner later in the hand.

A player may with advantage repeatedly lead a suit in which his partner is void, or will soon become void, so that his partner may win the trick with a *carta gelosa* or other *tarocco nobile*. It is his responsibility, however, to lead this suit only so long as he is sure that there are other cards of that suit still in play, taking into account the number already played, the number in the *Fola*, and the number in his own hand. If the player to his right trumps, his partner will know that he can safely overtrump with a *carta gelosa*, since the other opponent will have to follow suit: to lead a card in a plain suit in which the player to one's left has one or more cards is called a *rifitta*, and is always the safest possible lead. If a player has been leading a suit, and comes to the point where there are no cards of that suit left save in his own hand, he must not continue to lead that suit without first switching to some other lead, as a signal to his partner that the suit is no longer safe. The only occasion on which the switch is unnecessary is when the first unsafe lead is the last card of the suit in the player's hand, since his partner can then be expected to know that this is the last card of the suit in play. A particular case of a *rifitta* is that in which the player knows that the opponent to his left still has the King of the suit. It is normally bad play to lead towards one's partner's King.

In general, it is not good play to lead trumps early in the hand unless the two partners hold between them a great many trumps, including most of the high ones. A signal to one's partner that one has the *Trombe* is called a *fumata*, and is made by leading either a *Papa* or a *sopraventi* (a trump from XXI to XXVII). If the whereabouts of the *Trombe* is already known, such a signal is taken as indicating possession of the *Mondo*, or, in general, of the highest *Aria* whose whereabouts is not known. RMS states that playing the X the first time one trumps a trick in a plain suit is recognised by some players as a signal that one has the *Trombe*, but warns that many do not recognise this convention; it also states



that, among some, a *fumata* with the XXV, XXVI or XXVII indicates possession of the two highest trumps, or of two *Arie*, and one with the XXI, XXII, XXIII or XXIV possession of the three highest trumps, or of three *Arie*. When a *fumata* is given, the partner, if he has strong trumps, may decide to initiate a *giuoco di giro*, that is to lead trumps repeatedly in an attempt to exhaust all the opponents' trumps. A signal to commence a *giuoco di giro* is to lead the *Uno* or other *carta gelosa*, in the knowledge that partner is certain to be able to take the trick: this signal is known as *girare* – to 'turn' a card to one's partner. In a *giuoco di giro* it may be possible to catch an *Aria* belonging to the opponents by means of a finesse: for example one player may lead *sopratrenti* towards his partner, who holds back a high *Aria* until the opponents' *Aria* falls.

When playing third to a plain suit or trump trick, a *tenuta* consists of playing a sufficiently high trump to prevent the fourth player from winning the trick with an important counting card. For example, with a trump from the VI to the IX one can make a *tenuta* to a Papa, with one from the XIV to the XIX a *tenuta* to the XIII, and with a *sopraventi* a *tenuta* to the XX.

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The early history of the game is far from easy to determine. There are two quite separate questions. First, how old are the fundamental rules – the selection of counting cards, their values, the composition of the *versicole* and the procedure of robbing the pack? Secondly, how old is the four-handed form with partners? The literary sources throw little light on the first question. Malatesti's riddle 20, in Part 1 of *La Sfinge* (1640) has, as its answer, '*L'Uno de' Germini*', and he explains this answer by remarking that the *Uno* can form part of two *versicole*, namely *Uno*, 13 and 28 and *Uno*, *Matto* and *Trombe*. One might wonder whether a *versicola* of *Papi* was not yet recognised, but Minucci's account of Minchiate in his notes of 1676 to Lippi's *Il Malmantile Racquistato* gives the rules governing counting cards and *versicole* precisely as in the XVIII-century descriptions of the game. So far as the evidence goes, therefore, the fundamentals of the game seem

to have been the same in the XVII century as in the XVIII century. Minucci's account also explains the procedure of robbing the pack, just as in the XVIII century form; and, indeed, Lippi's stanza 61 of his 8th Canto concerns the fury of a player who is penalised for having forgotten to discard after he had robbed the pack.

The XVI-century sources unfortunately give no clue, one way or the other, to the play of the game. Since the pack itself was obviously a deliberate creation, the game played with that pack must have been one too. On this ground we might suppose that its fundamental rules were the same from the start. However, we noted two XV-century references to a game called 'Minchiate', and conjectured that these related to an ancestral game played with the 78-card pack. If there was such a game, presumably in it all the court cards would have been counting cards, with their usual Tarot values of 5, 4, 3, and 2. The *versicole* in such an ancestral game may have consisted of sequences of court cards in one suit, sets of three or four Queens, *Cavalli* or *Fanti*, the *Uno* (or *Bagatto*), *Trombe* (or *Angelo*) and *Matto*, and sequences of *Papi* (the first five trumps) or of *Arie*, with the *Matto* capable of being added to any *versicola* complete without it. This would have been a game quite similar to Tarocchino. Whether or not there was an ancestor of the 97-card game played with 78 cards, the complex and to some extent arbitrary nature of the rules of the 97-card game make it tempting to speculate that the original game was simpler, especially since the irregularities of the rules do not correspond to the designs of the cards. There is nothing in the appearance of the trumps to distinguish *tarocchi nobili* from *tarocchi ignobili*, while on the other hand the red backgrounds of the trumps from XXXIII upwards suggest that they might once have had a special role in the game. One might perhaps conjecture that, when it was first invented, the rules of the game with 97 cards were a good deal simpler and closer to those of Tarot as played in Bologna and in Sicily. Perhaps originally all the court cards were counting cards, among the trumps, only the *Matto*, the *Papi* and the eight red-coloured cards were counting cards,

with their later point-values. *Versicole* must have been a feature of the game from the start, but could have included sets of three or four Queens, *Cavalli* or *Fanti*, and otherwise, save for the *Uno*, *Trombe* and *Matto*, have consisted solely of sequences of counting cards, including sequences of court cards in one suit. In such a case, this would still have been a game much more similar to Tarocchino than the classic form of Minchiate. On this hypothesis, some changes must have occurred somewhere around the end of the XVI century, involving the demotion of the court cards other than Kings, the invention of additional *versicole*, and the corresponding promotion of trump cards that had previously been *ignobili*. All this is, however, mere speculation, and may be on the wrong track altogether: quite possibly, the later rules governing counting cards and *versicole* were a feature of the game from its origin.

The question how old the four-handed partnership game was is also puzzling. All the XVIII-century sources treat it as the principal form of Minchiate. It would be highly plausible that it had always been so, since other games of this form were well known in the XVI century; but in fact Minucci's account of 1676 does not even mention the partnership game, but instead briefly alludes to two-handed and three-handed forms and devotes most of the space to the four-handed game in which each plays for himself (*ad ognun per se*). It may therefore be that the partnership game was an invention of the XVIII century; or it may be that it was much older, but was temporarily out of fashion in the later XVII century.

One feature that was certainly an XVIII-century innovation was the practice whereby the dealer, having first robbed the pack, looks through what remains of the *Fola* and extracts all counting cards from it. This practice is not mentioned by Minucci; and this omission cannot be due solely to his confining himself to the game in which each plays for himself, because Brunetti, in his account of the four-handed game *ad ognun per se*, includes the practice, to which

he gives the odd Spanish-sounding name of *entragnos* (*entrañas* = entrails).<sup>18</sup> Brunetti also says, however, that the four-handed game with partners is sometimes played without *entragnos* – indeed, he promises to give a separate account of the partnership game without *l'entragnos*, a promise which he fails to keep. Brunetti's account of the procedure with the *Fola* is very slightly different from that given in 12.1 above, in that the dealer's partner plays no role. According to Brunetti, after robbing the pack the dealer himself exposes the entire remainder of the *Fola* for all to see, and takes any counting cards contained in it. He and the player to his left then discard as usual, and the player to the dealer's right leads to the first trick. The dealer and the player to his left then expose their discards, which are presumably put together with the rest of the *Fola* to be kept to the right of the dealer. On the assumption that, when the game is played without the *entragnos*, it is played in exactly the same way save that the dealer does not extract counting cards from the *Fola*, we arrive at the following.

## 12.2 Partnership Minchiate without *entragnos*

All proceeds as in the game 12.1 up to the point at which the dealer has robbed the pack, and has come to a card which is neither a counting card nor a trump higher than the XX. He then turns over the remaining cards of the *Fola* for all to see, but, even if it contains counting cards, he does not take them. All then pick up their cards; if the dealer, the player to his left or both have robbed any cards, they discard an equal number of cards, which must not be counting cards, face down. The player to the right of the dealer then leads the first card to the first trick. The dealer and the player to his left now turn their discards face up for all to see; these discards are then gathered up and placed, together with the undealt cards, face down to the right of the dealer to form the *Fola*. Declarations of

<sup>18</sup> The word is not used in this sense in other sources, but Bernardi uses the similar word *entraynos*, which he explains as Spanish term meaning 'imperfect', in connection with the payments at the end of the hand. After all the 'perfect' *resti* of 60 points have been paid, there is a final *resto d'etraynos*, which is paid for the remaining part of 60 points.

*versicole* held in hand are then made in turn, starting with the player to the right of the dealer, and all proceeds as before.

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A strength of the four-handed game is that all or most of the important cards are in play, and that at the start of play everyone has a good deal of information about the whereabouts of the cards. It seems evident that the original intention was that the dealer should not be more privileged than the player to his left, and that the process whereby, having robbed the pack, he then extracted any remaining counting cards was a slightly clumsy device introduced later to ensure that all counting cards were in play.

The two- and three-handed games, briefly mentioned by Minucci, are referred to with equal brevity by Bisteghi in *Il Giuoco Pratico* (1753). Because of the cursory character of these notices, it is difficult to feel certain of how they were played; but the following represents what appears to be intended.

### 12.3 Two-handed Minchiate

There is no robbing of the pack. The dealer gives twenty-five cards to each player, starting with his opponent. (It is not stated how the deal is made: possibly in two rounds of eight cards each followed by one of nine.) Apparently the last card dealt to each player is not exposed. The undealt cards are not looked at, but are set aside face down. The opponent leads a card to the first trick, and then declares any *versicole* he has, and scores for them; the dealer then declares his *versicole*, scores for them, and completes the first trick. The play is under the same rules as 12.1, except of course that the special situation in which a King must be played to the first trick in a suit does not arise. Each player scores for any counting cards he captures from his opponent. At the end of the hand, there are scores for the player who won the last trick, for the player who won the majority of the tricks, for counting cards won in tricks, and for *versicole* included in the cards won in tricks, just as in 12.2, save that the player who has won the

most tricks scores as many points as he has cards in excess of 25. The player with the lower total pays to his opponent the difference between their totals. *Resti* are used only to represent an exact number of 60 points, so that there is no distinction between points and game points.

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#### 12.4 Three-handed Minchiate

All is as in the two-handed game, the dealer giving twenty-five cards to each player, starting with the player to his right, who leads to the first trick. Settlement for declared *versicole* takes place between each pair of players, according to the difference in their scores, and the same applies to settlement at the end of the hand. A player who loses a counting card during play pays its value to each opponent; in this game the rule requiring a King to be played if a trump is first played to the first trick in that suit does apply. If a player who has the *Matto* makes no tricks, he surrenders it at the end of the round to the winner of the trick to which he played it.

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Much more interesting is the four-handed game in which each player plays for himself. As already mentioned, Minucci, writing in 1676, devotes most of his account to this game, and it is described in almost the same way by Bisteghi in 1753. Brunetti, writing in 1747, devotes a separate section to the game, from which, however, he omits a crucial feature of it as described by Minucci and Bisteghi; he remarks, however, that it is nowadays in disuse. This is not at all the impression given in RGGM, written in 1781, in which the game without partners is repeatedly referred to, as a well-known form, but is not accorded a separate description, the rules being taken to be identical with those of the partnership game. In the 1820 edition of RGGM, however, a new section on the game without partners is added, and this describes a form that differs at several points both from the partnership game and from that described by

Minucci. It seems best, therefore, to set it out in three stages: the Minucci/Bisteghi form (12.5); the Brunetti-RGGM (1781) form (12.6); and the RGGM (1820) form (12.7).

### 12.5 Four-handed Minchiate without partners (first form 1676-1753)

As in the two- and three-handed games, there is no effective distinction between points and game points, *resti* being used solely as a strict equivalent of an exact sum of 60 points. The deal is exactly as in the partnership game, the player to the dealer's left robbing the pack in the process of cutting it, and the dealer robbing the pack at the end of the deal; the last card dealt to each player is exposed. If the dealer or the player to his left robs counting cards from the pack, each of the three players pays him their value; similarly, if the exposed card dealt to any player is a counting card, each of the other three players pays him its value. Minucci (1676) does not allow the dealer, after he has robbed the pack, to extract any counting cards remaining in the *Fola*; Bisteghi (1753) does. The dealer now exposes the *Fola*, and he and the player to his left make their discards face down. Next there is an option for one of the four players to drop out of the play. At least three players must play, so as soon as any player announces that he is dropping out, all the others must stay in. The player to dealer's right has the first choice; if on the basis of his hand he decides to stay in the second player has the option to drop out, then the player to dealer's left and finally the dealer. A player who drops out of the hand lays his cards face down, and they are added to the *Fola*; apparently no other player has the right to inspect the hand of the player who has dropped out. At the end of the hand, a player who has dropped out has to pay a certain sum to the winner of the last trick. According to Minucci, if the first player (the one to the right of the dealer) drops out, he pays 30 points to the winner of the last trick; if the second player does, he pays 40 points; the third player pays 50 points; and the dealer 60 points. Bisteghi's payments are less severe: 20 points for the first player; 30 for the second player; and 40 for the third player or the dealer.

According to both Minucci and Bisteghi, however, any player who, during play, loses a counting card must pay its value to the player who has dropped out as well as to each of the two other active players.

When any one of the players has dropped out, or all four have said they will play, the player to the right of the dealer, or, if he has dropped out, the second player, leads to the first trick. Then the discards of the dealer and of the player to his left are exposed and added to the *Fola*, and each of the active players declares any *versicole* he has: each pair of active players settle between themselves for *versicole*. Play to the first trick is then completed, and the hands are played out according to the usual Minchiate rules, as in 12.1; if the player with the *Matto* makes no tricks, he surrenders it at the end of the round to the winner of the trick to which he played it. Any player who loses a counting card in the course of the play has to pay its value to each of the other players, including one who has dropped out, as already noted. At the end of the hand, points for the last trick, for the total number of cards won, for counting cards won in tricks, and for *versicole* included in cards won in tricks are reckoned in the usual way, save, of course, that each player counts up the points only on the cards he himself has won; a player who has won more than 21 cards in tricks scores as many points as he has cards in excess of 21. Settlement is made between each pair of active players, and, of course, a player who has dropped out pays to the winner of the last trick what he owes him.

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#### 12.6 Four-handed Minchiate without partners (second form 1747-81)

All is as in the preceding version, save that no player is allowed to drop out, the dealer is definitely allowed to extract counting cards from the *Fola* after robbing it, and payment is made in *resti*: at the end of the round, settlement is made between each pair of players, the one with the lower total score paying to the other 1 *resto* for every 60 points or part of 60 points in the difference between



their total scores in points. The game is therefore played in every respect like the partnership game, save for the essential differences arising from the fact that each player is playing for himself.

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### 12.7 Four-handed Minchiate without partners (third form 1820)

The additional *versicola* called *Demonio, Mondo e Carne*, consisting of the XIV (the Devil), the XXXV (the Twins) and the *Mondo* is recognised: it is worth 20 points, the XIV being treated as worth 5 points when included in this *versicola*. When a *versicola* contains one or more *Arie* it is scored as a multiple *versicola*: its value is multiplied by a factor which consists of

- (a) the number of *Arie* included in the *versicola*, plus
- (b) 1 more if the *Trombe* is included, plus
- (c) 1 more if any cards that are not *Arie* are included.

Thus the *Sole, Mondo* and *Trombe* form a quadruple *versicola*, because there are three *Arie*, one of them the *Trombe*. The *Stella, Luna* and *Sole* form a triple *versicola*, because it consists of three *Arie*; but the XXXV, *Stella* and *Luna* also form a triple *versicola*, because, although there are only two *Arie*, there is also a card that is not an *Aria*. The XXXIV, the XXXV and the *Stella* thus form a double *versicola*. Practice varies concerning the *versicola del Matto* or about any *versicola* to which the *Matto* has been added. Some do not allow the presence of the *Matto* to affect the value of the multiplying factor; some add 1 to the multiplier of any *versicola* containing the *Matto*, and some add 2 to it. Agreement on this point must be reached before the start of play.

The player to the left of the dealer does not rob the pack in the course of cutting it, nor does the dealer rob the pack when he has completed the deal. The deal of twenty-one cards to each player is carried out in the usual way, save that the last card dealt to each player is not exposed. The *Fola* of thirteen cards is now handed, face down, to the player to the right of the dealer. This player looks

at his own hand, but not at the *Fola*, and may now choose to do one of two things. He may choose to play in this hand, in which case he looks through the *Fola* and extracts from it any counting cards it contains; these cards belong to him, although he is not paid their value by the other players, and he makes a corresponding discard of non-counting cards. He may, alternatively, choose not to play, but to drop out of the hand. In this case, he puts the *Fola*, still unseen, up for auction. The bidding is carried out in *resti* and *lupini*, 30 *lupini* being considered equivalent to one *resto*. A starting price is agreed before play for each such auction; it is usually taken to be 10 *resti*. The second player is deemed to have bid this starting price for the *Fola*, and if there is no bid from the other two players, he must take the *Fola* at the agreed starting price. Otherwise, of course, the *Fola* goes to the highest bidder. Whoever obtains the *Fola* in the auction extracts the counting cards from it and adds them to his hand, discarding an equal number of non-counting cards. The cards extracted from the *Fola*, either by the first player or, if there is an auction, by the highest bidder, are presumably shown to the other players, but the rest of the *Fola* and the discarded cards are set aside face down, and not shown to the other players. The payment to the auctioneer – the player to the right of the dealer who has dropped out of the hand – is made only at the end of the hand, in accordance with the principles stated below. During the play, each player keeps his own score as a running total.

If the player to the dealer's right is playing, he leads to the first trick; if there was an auction of the *Fola*, the second player (opposite the dealer) leads. When this lead has been made, the players declare in turn any *versicole* they have. Each records the points for the *versicole* he declares; in addition, each player is immediately paid by each of the other active players one *resto* for each *versicola* he declares. In computing these payments, a double *versicola* (e.g. XXXIV, XXXV and *Stella*) counts as two *versicole*, a triple one (e.g. XX, XXX and *Trombe*) as three *versicole*, and so on. After the declarations, play to the first trick is resumed, and the hands are played out according to the usual Minchiate

rules of play, as in 12.1. Any player who loses a counting card subtracts its value from his current score; if this would leave a negative score, then instead each of the other active players adds its value to his score.

If there was an auction of the *Fola*, there are payments to and from the auctioneer (the player who dropped out). The details of these payments are slightly complicated, but in essence they are as follows:

- (a) the auctioneer pays 1 *resto* to the winner of the last trick;
- (b) a player who did not win the last trick, but who lost one or more counting cards in the course of play, must pay 1 *resto* to the auctioneer;
- (c) in addition, the player who bought the *Fola* pays the auctioneer the amount of the final bid.

So, for example, if the *Fola* was bought for 12 *resti*, the player who bought it pays the auctioneer 11 *resti* in total if he wins the last trick, 13 *resti* if he does not win the last trick and loses one or more counting cards, and just 12 *resti* if he neither wins the last trick nor loses any counting cards.

The complication arises when the final bid includes *lupini*. The *lupini* only affect the payment to the auctioneer if the buyer of the *Fola* wins the last trick. When this happens, the total value of counting cards lost by the buyer is added to the number of *lupini* bid. If the total is less than 30, the number of *resti* paid to the auctioneer is one less than the number of *resti* bid, as usual for a player who wins the last trick; if it is exactly equal to 30, the buyer has to pay the exact number of *resti* that were bid; and if the value of counting cards lost plus *lupini* bid comes to more than 30, the buyer has to pay the auctioneer an extra *resto* for the lost counting cards, just as though he had not won the last trick.

Suppose, for example, that the bid was 12 *resti* and 10 *lupini*. If the buyer lost no counting cards, all is as if he had bid only 12 *resti*: he pays 11 *resti* if he won the last trick, and 12 if he did not. If he lost counting cards to a total value of less than 20 points (20 being the difference between the additional 10 *lupini* that

he bid and the number of *lupini* (30) that make up one *resto*), again all is as if he bid 12 *resti*: he pays 11 *resti* if he won the last trick, and 13 *resti* if he did not. If he lost counting cards to the exact value of 20 points, on the other hand, he pays 12 *resti* if he won the last trick and 13 if he did not; and if he lost counting cards to a value of more than 20 points, he pays 13 *resti* whether or not he won the last trick.

Finally, the active players reckon up their point-totals, which comprise points for *versicole* declared during the first trick, less points for losing counting cards in play, together with the usual 10 points for the last trick, points on counting cards won in tricks, and points for *versicole* contained among cards won in tricks; there are no points for having more than 21 cards. Settlement is made between players according to the difference between their total scores, in *resti*, at the rate of 1 *resto* for 40 points or part of 40 points. If there was an auction for the *Fola*, the auctioneer does not take part in these payments.

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It is plain that this latest version of the four-handed game without partners (12.7) was a development of 12.5, in which a player could drop out, not of 12.6, in which there are always four active players. So some form of 12.5 must presumably have continued to be played alongside 12.6 throughout the XVIII century.

In his addition of 1731 to Minucci's notes, Biscioni described two simple gambling games, *A sei tocchi* and *Al palio*, played with the Minchiate pack. Since these are in no sense Tarot games, they will be described in Appendix C.

There are two baffling mysteries connected with Minchiate. In many collections, public and private, there are Tarot packs from Lucca, probably datable to the XVII century. For a long time these were classified as defective Minchiate packs. When their special character was recognised, they were at first called Orfeo packs, because the greater number of them had on their backs a figure of Orpheus with the word ORFEO, presumably all made by a cardmaker

using that as his trade-name. But subsequently packs have been found with other back designs. In the Orfeo packs and all others of this type, the Jack of Swords holds a shield with the arms of Lucca; moreover, one of the other back designs, in the collection of David Temperley of Birmingham, bears the inscription DI LUCCA, leaving no doubt about the Lucchese origin of packs of this kind.

The designs of the cards in these different Lucchese packs coincide; and most of them are exactly the same as those of the corresponding cards in the older pattern for the Minchiate pack. This does not hold good of the Fool or Matto, nor of the court cards or Aces of the suits: these all have designs quite different from their Minchiate counterparts. In particular, the Cavalli show genuine knights on horseback, not the half-human figures of their Minchiate equivalents, and the lowest court figure in each of the four suits is an incontestably male Fante. But the trump cards and the numeral cards from 2 to 10 in all the suits are exactly the same in design as those in the Minchiate pack. The most puzzling feature of the Lucchese packs is the composition of the trump sequence. This consists, in all surviving examples, of the trumps from VIII (the Wheel) to XV (the House of the Devil or Tower), together with the five highest unnumbered trumps or *arie*, in ascending order the Star, the Moon, the Sun, the World and the Trombe (equivalent to the Angel), all with designs precisely the same as in the Minchiate pack. This selection of twelve trumps appears quite bizarre. No other case is known of a reduction in the ratio of trumps to suit cards; moreover, the suppression of the trump I, in all other Tarot games a crucial card, having a high point-value but extremely vulnerable, seems inexplicable. Yet, although most of them are incomplete, the composition of the Lucchese packs is too uniform for the absence of the eight lowest trumps to be the result of coincidence: we must acquiesce in their possessing the usual 56 suit cards, the Fool and only 12 trumps. The solution of this mystery is hidden from us: we know of no source describing the mode of play of the game of Tarot in Lucca with its enigmatic 69-card pack.

The other mystery relates to far more recent times. A possible remote descendant of the Minchiate pack was made, possibly in the 1930s, by Piatnik of Vienna. The wrapper is entirely in French, and is labelled '*Tarot à 73 cartes*'. The 73-card pack consists of the usual thirty-two suit cards of an Austrian 54-card French-suited Tarock pack, but with 40 trump cards together with the usual Austrian Sküs (Fool). The trumps show rustic scenes of the type usual in Austrian 54-card packs, and are numbered from 1 to 40 in Arabic numerals, half of which are in red and half in black: specifically, numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 and 40 are in red, and the rest in black. Apart from Minchiate packs, this is the only Tarot pack containing forty trumps; and we have found no other trace of a game played with 73 cards. It is conceivable that it represents some descendant of Minchiate that has been subject to influence from the games played with the shortened 54-card Tarot pack, though the significance of the red and black numerals escapes us. It was obviously made for export to some purely French-speaking area. The best guess we can make at the region it was intended for is the Val d'Aosta, a somewhat isolated part of Italy where French is spoken and a highly localised tradition might well survive without being discovered by anyone from outside. Whatever may be the explanation of this apparent freak, it provides yet another illustration of the gaps that must surely remain in our knowledge of the history of the game of Tarot, however thoroughly we investigate it.

## CHAPTER 13

### Rome and Naples

As was explained in Chapter 1, by the XVI century there had developed three distinct systems using the 'Latin' suit-signs of Swords, Batons, Cups and Coins, which may be labelled the Italian, Spanish and Portuguese systems. In the Italian system, the Batons are typically smooth staffs and the Swords, on the numeral cards, typically curved (although straight in the Minchiate pack and in some early hand-painted Tarot packs), and both are typically interlaced on the numeral cards (although on Ferrarese cards of the XV century the Swords are curved but not interlaced). In regular packs, the Italian court figures are all male: a seated King, a mounted Knight or Cavalier and a standing Jack (on Florentine cards and in the Minchiate pack, and for a short time on Bolognese cards, the lowest court figure in Cups and Coins was female); of course a Queen was added in Tarot packs. In the Iberian peninsula, the Swords were always straight. After a century or more of experimentation, two distinct systems crystallised out, which can conveniently be called the Spanish and the Portuguese systems. The court figures in the Spanish system are again all male, but the King is standing. The Batons are knotty cudgels, and they and the Swords are arranged separately and upright on the numeral cards; there are no 10s. In the Portuguese system, the Kings are seated, and the lowest court figure in all four suits is female (a Maid). The Batons and straight Swords are interlaced; the Batons have a regular shape,

though lightly notched. Again, there are no 10s,<sup>1</sup> and the Aces bear large dragons holding the suit-signs in their mouths.

Up to the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the whole of Italy, save for Venice and Piedmont/Savoy, was under Spanish domination. Sicily was under the rule of the Kings of Aragon from 1409, and after the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, of united Spain; it was governed by Viceroys from 1442. The Kingdom of Naples was under Spanish rule, exercised by Viceroys, from 1503. In 1535 Charles V made his son Philip Duke of Milan, and Milan was thereafter likewise ruled by Viceroys. After the sack of Rome by Imperial troops in 1527 and the declaration of Bologna in 1530, the whole Italian peninsula, with the two exceptions of Venice and Savoy, was effectively controlled by Spain. With the Treaty of Utrecht Spanish domination was replaced by Austrian. Austria acquired Milan, Naples and Sardinia, Sicily being allotted to Savoy; but in 1717 Savoy and Austria exchanged Sicily and Sardinia.

It therefore seems unsurprising that the various standard patterns for the regular pack now in use in the southern part of the country – from Sicily as far north as Piacenza – are of Spanish type; the Italian system survives only in the patterns named after Venice (or Treviso), Trent, Brescia and Bergamo, and in the *Primiera Bolognese*. Italians do not think of the Sicilian, Neapolitan, Piacentine and other patterns as Spanish, but as Italian; but if we classify the ‘Latin’ systems into the three subsystems just described – Italian, Spanish and Portuguese – that which these patterns exemplify is incontrovertibly Spanish.

It would be natural to think this the result of the prolonged Spanish domination. It has only recently become clear that this is not so at all. Certainly packs conforming to the Spanish system were known and manufactured in Italy before the XVIII century, especially for playing the famous game of *Ombre*, of Spanish origin. But it was not in fact until the period of Spanish domination

<sup>1</sup> The Leber collection in the Bibliothèque Municipale of Rouen has a pack of Portuguese type which exceptionally includes 10s.



came to an end that the regular packs normally used in the southern two-thirds of the country came to be of Spanish type. What was in use before this, in Sicily, in the Kingdom of Naples, which extended over the whole peninsula south of Rome, and in Rome and most of the Papal States, was the Portuguese system. The Portuguese system is reasonably so called, because, until it was abandoned in Portugal during the XIX century in favour of the French system, it was the Portuguese national type of playing-card pack and was carried by Portuguese sailors to Japan, Indonesia and India. It was nevertheless emphasised in Chapter 1 that it was probably of Spanish origin, and continued to be manufactured in Spain, probably only for export, throughout the XVI century and possibly later; indeed, we do not know if there were any cardmakers in Portugal.

The Portuguese system was certainly in use in Rome by the middle of the XVI century; there is some reason to suppose it already to have been in use there in the early part of that century. The game of Tarot and its daughter game of Minchiate must have spread to Rome from Florence around 1500. There are two poems describing cardinals at a conclave playing Tarot: one relates to the conclave that elected Adrian VI in 1522, the other to that which elected Pius IV in 1559.<sup>2</sup> The game of Minchiate, in particular, gained great popularity in Rome; but we know from surviving cards that the parent game of Tarot was also played there, and cards manufactured for it.

Everywhere in Italy the same standard pattern would be used for the regular pack and for the suit cards, other than the Queen, of the Tarot pack. The exception occurred where, as in Florence, the French system had been adopted for the regular pack; in that case, the older Latin system continued to be used for the Tarot pack. This is true also of Rome: but there the standard pattern for the regular pack was one conforming to the Portuguese system. In the Lady

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<sup>2</sup> For the first, see Vittorio Rossi (ed.), *Pasquinate di Pietro Aretino ed anonime per il Conclave a l'elezione di Adriano VI*, Palermo, 1891, no. XXXII, or Mario dell'Arco, *Pasquino e le Pasquinate*, Milan, 1957, pp. 87-8. For the second, see T. Depaulis, 'Roger de Gaignères et ses tarots', *Le Vieux Papier*, fasc. 301, July 1986, pp. 117-24 and fasc. 302, Oct. 1986, p. 160.

Schreiber collection in the British Museum there are two incomplete sheets, or two halves of a single sheet, for just such a pack. Between them, the two sheets or half-sheets comprise all twelve court cards and all four Aces, together with the 2 to 5 of Swords and a fragment of the 6. The 2 of Swords bears the date 1613, the Kings of Cups and Swords hold shields with faces on them and the Maids of Swords and Cups hold shields on which is a column. These sheets are accompanied by two other incomplete sheets for a Tarot pack, again conforming to the Portuguese system; the designs of the suit cards do not coincide with those of the regular pack, but are very similar. One comprises Maids of Swords and Batons, a Cavallo of Batons, half a Cavallo of Coins, a 2 of Swords and half a 3 of Swords; the other has numbered trumps – 5 (a Sultan, corresponding to the Pope), 6 (Love), 10 (the Chariot), 11 (the Wheel) and the very tops of the 20 and 21. The 2 of Swords bears the maker's trade-name and address ALLA COLONA IN PIAZZA NICOSIA. The numbering of the Chariot and the Wheel as 10 and 11 agrees with that in the Florentine in the Rosenwald collection in Washington, and supports the natural hypothesis that the game of Tarot reached Rome from Florence. The replacement of the Pope by a Sultan is understandable in Rome, and helps to explain Cardinal Ruffo's demand that the *Papi* of the Bolognese pack be replaced by Moors.

Further examples of this Roman pattern have been discovered. An incomplete sheet of cards of the same pattern, made in Ronciglione, was found in the binding of a volume dated 1585: the sheet consists of the four Aces, the four Cavalli and the 2 to 5 of Swords.<sup>3</sup> The designs are similar to those of the alla Colonna cards in the British Museum, save that the Cavallo of Coins is bearded and the Cavallo of Batons is facing the other way. A document cited by Dr. Milano from the reign of Pope Innocent XII (1691-1700) shows that the manufacture of playing cards of high quality (*carte fine*) was reserved to

<sup>3</sup> See Alberto Milano, 'Ronciglione: playing cards of a XVII-century Italian state', *The Playing Card*, Vol. XVII, 1989, pp. 78-85.

cardmakers in Rome itself, while those of normal quality (*carte ordinarie*) were made in Ronciglione. The document refers to the making of French cards, Spanish cards, Ombre cards, Tarot cards and Roman cards. Finally, a sheet of Tarot cards in the Biblioteca Civica in Rovereto comprises the four Queens, the four 10s, the Fool and trump 1 (Bagatto).<sup>4</sup> The designs correspond closely with those of the sheet of Tarot cards in the British Museum; the sheet has been conjectured to be intended for the very same pack; this, though supported by the identical designs of the borders in the two cases, is dubious, but in any case the date must be about the same.

The Roman version of the Portuguese system has several distinctive features. Although it has all the defining characteristics of that system – interlaced Batons and straight but interlaced Swords, seated Kings (and, in the Tarot pack, Queens), Maids as the lowest court figures in all four suits, and dragons on the Aces – it does not correspond at all closely with the classic version that was used in Portugal. The Maids in the suits of Swords and Batons are not being attacked by beasts, and hence are not using their weapons to defend themselves from them. The dragons on the Aces take the form of gryphons. But the most interesting difference is that the cards bear indices giving their rank and suit. These are placed in the centre at the top of each card, and, the other way up, in the centre at the bottom, in both cases interrupting the border that surrounds the main design. They take the form of a letter for the suit (S, B, C or D) and a letter or numeral for the rank. For the Kings, Cavalli, Maids and Aces the letters are R, C, F (for Fantina, Fantesca or Fantiglia) and A: in the Tarot pack, the Queens bear no indices, but only a row of six stars; it would be confusing to use R for Regina. The Tarot trumps are indexed by their numbers; the Fool has no indices, but six stars instead. The 10s, which presumably would not figure in the regular pack, also bear six stars in place of indices. On the court cards and Aces, the letter for

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<sup>4</sup> See letter from Peter Blaas and reply by John Berry, *The Playing Card*, Vol. XXI, 1993, pp. 95-8.

the rank precedes that for the suit; but on the numeral cards from 2 upwards, the letter for the suit precedes the numeral. This use of indices precedes by three centuries the XIX-century American invention of corner indices. If the Roman pattern evolved from cards of Portuguese type originally imported from Spain, as presumably it did, it must have had a considerable time in which to do so.

A very recent discovery is of twenty-six separate cards from a pack of Portuguese type made in Rome in about 1550; they are in the collection of Dr. Alberto Milano, who kindly sent us photocopies of them. They include the Kings of Swords and Batons (with a double-headed eagle and fleur-de-lys on their respective shields), the Cavalli of Swords, Batons and Cups, the Maids of the same three suits, the Aces of Batons and Cups, the 3-5 of Swords, the 3 and 6 of Batons, the 3-7 of Cups and the 2 and 4-7 of Coins. The 4 of Coins bears the names GIOVANN ANT and the 2 of Coins the name TESTONE. The Maid of Cups holds a shield which bears the image of a column; so presumably the maker Giovanni Antonio Testone likewise used the trade-name 'alla Colonna'. The dragons on the Aces are rather more primitive than those on the later alla Colonna cards. There are indices at top and bottom, just as on the later cards; the rank of each card, but not the suit, is also indicated by letter or numeral half-way down the side of each card, the right way up on the left and the other way up on the right – a feature not subsequently preserved.

In the Cary collection in the Beinecke Library at Yale University are two half-sheets, evidently two halves of the same sheet, showing the 2-9 of Swords and of Batons. The suit-signs both assume the form they have in the Portuguese system, and indeed resemble those on the alla Colonna sheets, although there are no indices. These half-sheets probably date from the early XVI century, and are apparently Italian. They may therefore well represent the earliest form of cards of Portuguese type made in Rome, before the invention of the indices.

If our conjecture about Cardinal Ruffo's suggestion about Moors is correct, the Roman pattern was still in use in Rome, at least for the Tarot pack, in

1725. But, when Lady Anne Miller met Bonnie Prince Charlie in Rome in 1770, he showed her some Tarot cards with which he had been playing with friends.<sup>5</sup> “And here is the Pope”, she remembered him as saying as he showed her a card: so these were not cards of the Roman pattern. We must date its demise between 1725 and 1770: 1735 would be a probable date. Thus we may see the predominance of the Portuguese system for the regular pack, adapted for the Tarot pack, as lasting in Rome and the Papal States from early in the XVI century until the first third of the XVIII.

Unfortunately, although we know that Tarot was played in Rome with 78 cards, as well as Minchiate, from the XVI century onwards, we have no description of or clue to the Roman manner of playing the game. This is another gap in our knowledge, though not so tantalising as the two described at the end of Chapter 12. It is possible that some of the features of Sicilian Tarocchi, to be described in the next chapter, may reflect the way in which the game was played in Rome at the time when it was introduced from there to Sicily in 1662; but this is no more than speculation.

There is meagre, but convincing, evidence that the Portuguese system was also used in the Kingdom of Naples. This consists of two items, spanning the XVII century, the first from 1597 and the second from 1702. Two uncut sheets, together comprising a complete 48-card regular pack exemplifying the Portuguese system, are now in the collection of Mr. David Temperley of Birmingham, and were formerly in that of the late Sylvia Mann. The 9 of Coins bears the maker's name PIETRO CILIBERTO and the 4 of Cups the date 1597. Sylvia Mann, the greatest English playing-card collector ever, made the brilliant conjecture that these cards were from Sicily. However, a pair of scagliola table-tops at Newby Hall near Ripon in Yorkshire, which we were able to examine thanks to the kindness of the then owners, Mr and Mrs Robin Compton, suggests that this

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<sup>5</sup> Lady Anne Miller, *Letters from Italy*, Vol. II, London, 1776, p. 199.

guess was slightly off target. Scagliola is a technique of inlaying surfaces which was revived in Florence in the late XVII century and continued into the XVIII. It was highly popular with the English aristocracy, who imported numerous table-tops inlaid by scagliola. The makers of such table-tops frequently aimed at *trompe l'oeil* effects, often of playing cards. Those at Newby Hall, first spotted by Mr. David Temperley, were probably the earliest to be imported; they are the only ones showing cards without French suit-signs. They show cards of the Portuguese system. One table-top is inscribed "Manelli f.", giving the maker's name, and the other bears the date, 1702. On one face-down card is an inscription reading "Carte di Regno"; this is paralleled by the inscription "Carte di Genua" on the face of a card on a similar table-top in Callaly Castle. The Kingdom in question is undoubtedly the Kingdom of Naples, and the maker of the table-top was aiming to depict the standard pattern then in use in that Kingdom. Careful comparison of these table-tops with the Ciliberto cards shows a faithful preservation of the designs over more than a century:<sup>6</sup> there can be no doubt that we have here the XVII-century Neapolitan standard pattern, and that Pietro Ciliberto was a Neapolitan, not a Sicilian, cardmaker. A plate formerly, and perhaps still, in the church of S. Agostino in Naples gives the names of the 'consuls' of the guild of cardmakers in 1668; among them Giovanni Battista Ciliberto, perhaps the grandson of Pietro.<sup>7</sup> The designs of this Neapolitan pattern diverge a little from the Portuguese prototype, but far less than do those of the Roman cards. There are no indices either on the Ciliberto cards or on those shown on the table-tops. We may conclude that the Portuguese system was in use

<sup>6</sup> Two points are particularly striking. Both in the Ciliberto pack and on the Newby Hall table-top, the dragon on the Ace of Coins resembles the classic Portuguese version, detail for detail, save that the Ciliberto and Newby Hall dragons both have a leg and claw missing from the native Portuguese dragons. Both the Ciliberto and the Newby Hall versions of the Cavallo of Batons show the horse in right profile, with the cavalier turning his head to the right so as to be seen full-face, and raises his Baton with his left hand: all this differs from the standard Portuguese version.

<sup>7</sup> See p. 488 of the article by Giuseppe Ceci cited in footnote 8.

in the Kingdom of Naples throughout the XVII century; possibly earlier, but the evidence is lacking.

There is evidence that the game of Tarot was played in the Kingdom of Naples in the XVI and XVII centuries. There is a reference to the game of *tarocchi* in a poem, 'Capitolo del Malcontento', by the Neapolitan poet Luigi Tansillo, published in 1547. And a collection of *prammatiche* (customs) of the Kingdom of Naples contains a list, dated 1586, of permitted games, including *tarochi*, a list repeated with slight modifications, but still including *tarochi*, in 1612, 1631 and 1638. In 1631 the manufacture of playing cards was almost ruined owing to the plague and consequent disorders. The fifteen cardmakers merged into a single company; prices are quoted for ordinary packs, for those of French and Spanish type, and for *tarocchi*<sup>8</sup>. But we know of no reliable evidence that the game was still played in the southern half of the peninsula in the XVIII century, let alone at the present day.

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<sup>8</sup> We owe these references to Thierry Depaulis. They are taken from the article 'Il giuoco a Napoli durante il vicereame' by Giuseppe Ceci in *Archivio storico per le provincie napoletane*, Vol. XXII, 1897. Tansillo's poem is included in his *Capitoli giocosi e satirici*, ed. Marchese di Villarosa, with notes by S. Volpicella, Naples, 1870, pp. 265-77. The *prammatica* of 1586 is given in *Nuova collezione delle prammatiche del Regno di Napoli*, Naples, Vol. I, 1803, p. 337.

## CHAPTER 14

### Sicilian Tarocchi

A first sight of the Tarocco siciliano, now manufactured solely by the firm of Modiano, situated far from Sicily in Trieste, must cause great surprise to anyone familiar with other types of Tarot pack. Most Tarot cards are larger than ordinary playing cards: these are smaller even than the small cards of the regular Sicilian pattern. The pack contains 64 cards; the suit of Coins lacks the 2 and 3, and the other three suits the cards from Ace to 4. The designs are not those of the regular Sicilian pattern, which is of the Spanish type usual in southern Italy; rather, they have a general appearance of belonging to the Portuguese system. The Batons, though having the form of cudgels as on cards of the Spanish system, are interlaced, as are the straight Swords. The Kings are seated and the lowest court figures in all four suits are female. Those of Swords and Batons are not being attacked by beasts, however, but hold a bird and a flower, respectively, in their left hands. Furthermore, all the numeral cards of the suits, from 4 to 10, bear indices in the centre at top and bottom, those at the bottom the other way up: these take the form of rectangles enclosing a numeral for the rank followed by a letter for the suit (S, B, C and O for Ori). The only feature that belies the 'Portuguese' appearance is the sole Ace, the Ace of Coins, which has no dragon on it.

There is a Fool, but the trump-sequence is highly surprising. One trump is unnumbered and quite unfamiliar from other Tarot packs: it depicts a beggar and bears a scroll inscribed MISERIA (it is in fact the lowest trump). The rest bear Arabic numerals from 1 to 20 in the top right-hand corner. Trump 1 is plainly the



Bagatto, and trumps 2 and 3 the Empress and Emperor. Trump 4 shows a female figure with a breastplate, helmet and shield holding a banner. Trumps 5-7 are Temperance, Fortitude and Justice: their consecutive ordering suggests a descent from the Bolognese or Florentine tradition. Trumps 8-10 are readily identifiable, respectively, as Love, the Chariot and the Wheel of Fortune. Trump 11 shows a man hanged, by the neck, not by the foot, from a tree. Trump 12 represents the figure known in the Tarot de Marseille and the Tarocco piemontese as the Hermit, carrying a lighted lamp. Trump 13 is Death. We expect the Devil as trump 14, but instead we have a Ship. Trump 15 shows a Tower, with no element of fire or destruction. Trumps 16-18 are the Star, Moon and Sun, with unusual details: under the Star is a rider apparently holding up a circle enclosing it; beneath the Moon a girl indicates a man asleep under a tree; the Sun shines on a man attacking another with a club. Trump 19, which we expect to show the World, depicts Atlas holding up a blue globe. Most surprising of all, the highest trump, 20, shows Jupiter seated and brandishing a thunderbolt, his eagle standing beside him.

Before Modiano began to produce the Tarocco siciliano, in about 1966, the only firm to produce the pack was a small printer in Catania called Concetta Campione, which did not make any other kind of playing cards (and went out of business altogether in 1975). It had probably started to produce the pack after the closure in 1929 of the great cardmaking firm of Guglielmo Murari of Bari; it is almost certainly due to it that the Tarocco siciliano has survived. In Concetta Campione's version, the 'Hermit' held, not a lamp, but an hour-glass, as it had been in all previous examples of the Sicilian Tarot pack; the misinterpretation was that of whoever made the new designs for Modiano. This was a misinterpretation that had been made many times before in different forms of the Tarot pack; an hour-glass was the original object held by this figure, who symbolised Time. The mistake in the Sicilian pack differs only in that it occurred so late in its history.

Some of the perplexities that this unusual Tarot pack arouses at first sight will be dissolved when we know the history of the cards and the game in Sicily; others will not. We may resolve one straight away. Up to 1862, the standard form of the Tarocco siciliano was that of a 63-card pack, without the Ace of Coins. From that year until 1975, all playing cards sold in Italy were subject to a State tax; in Latin-suited packs, the Ace of Coins was printed as an empty circle in which the tax stamp was placed. Since the Tarocco siciliano then had no Ace of Coins, one was borrowed from the regular Sicilian pack and added to the Tarot pack for the sole purpose of bearing the tax stamp; it did not therefore properly belong to the Sicilian Tarot pack. It has, through inertia, remained a part of that pack even after 1975; but it is seldom used in play.

The Sicilian Tarot pack made today by Modiano, and its predecessor made by Concetta Campione, can both be assigned to a new standard pattern introduced in the XIX century. It may have been established by Gaetano Cimino, 13 cards from a Tarot pack by whom, from about 1850, are in the collection of Mr. Stuart Kaplan of Stamford, Connecticut. An almost complete example (missing only the numeral cards of Coins numbered lower than 8) by Lorenzo di Lorenzo was discovered by Professor Mario Di Liberto of Palermo, and is now in the collection of Dr Alberto Milano of Milan; the 13 cards by Gaetano Cimino tally completely with those by di Lorenzo. A complete example of what is almost certainly an earlier version, perhaps from about 1845, made by La Fortuna and with a 4 but not an Ace of Coins, was discovered by Signor Vito Arienti and is now in the Spielkarten-Museum in Leinfelden; this differs in certain details;<sup>1</sup> it may have been the inspiration for Gaetano Cimino's definitive version.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Notably, trump 2 shows, not an Empress but a seated moustached King, and on trump 9 the Chariot is seen from the front, not from the side (the Modiano version shows it in three-quarters view).

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed review of the history of the newer standard pattern of the Tarocco siciliano, see M. Dummett, 'The Later Pattern for Sicilian Tarots', *The Playing Card*, Vol. XXV, no. 3, 1996, pp. 90-7.

The older standard pattern for the Sicilian Tarot pack has left few surviving examples. The Museo Pitre at Palermo possesses an incomplete set by Felice Cimino, whose name we know from a list dated 1828 of cardmakers of Palermo, discovered by Franco Pratesi. A separate card gives his name and address. The set lacks nine cards: the lowest unnumbered trump and trumps 2, 5 and 7, the Cavallo of Cups, and the Cavallo, Maid, 8 and 7 of Swords. The 10 of Cups bears the date 1802 and the 7 of Cups the initials F C. There is also in the Museo Pitre an uncut and uncoloured sheet of numeral cards, in which the 7 of Cups again bears the initials F C., although the 10 of Cups is undated. More importantly, the same Museum has a pair of wood blocks for printing Sicilian Tarot cards of the older pattern, clearly, from details of their design, for the use of another cardmaker than Felice Cimino: together, they have the images of the Fool and of all 21 trumps. The Archivio di Stato in Palermo has impressions taken from four wood blocks for a complete Tarot pack of the older pattern. In the Cups suit, the name F. CIMINO appears on the 6, the initials F C. on the 7 and the date 1805 on the 10. These impressions were made in December 1838 in order to value the wood blocks for inheritance purposes; we may take it that Felice Cimino died in that year. Finally, a set of cards by the cardmaker Tuzzolino, whose name appears on the 10 of Coins, is in the collection of Michael Dummett: it consists of a complete set of trumps (including the Fool) and a complete suit of Coins (including the 4 but not of course the Ace); these cards again exemplify the earlier pattern, and may be dated to the very end of the XVIII century. Finally, a set of 20 cards from a Tarot pack of the older pattern by another member of the Cimino family, whose first initial was A, is in the collection of Stuart Kaplan: it includes seven trumps and six court cards, and was printed from a very worn wood block. Its date is certainly after 1828, since Mr. Kaplan discovered below the face of the 6 of Swords a fragment of printed text mentioning that date. With the exception of one unidentifiable card, the designs appear to coincide exactly with those of Felice Cimino, and the wood block may

have been that which formerly belonged to Felice, who, as we saw, died in 1838. We may accordingly guess the date of the pack as at about 1840.

These six items form a fairly sparse set of remnants of the older standard pattern for the 63-card Sicilian Tarot pack; but together they allow us to gain a complete knowledge of its entire composition. The suit cards conform completely to the 'Portuguese' system: the Batons are not cudgels, but regular, though notched, staffs, and the Maids of Swords and Batons are defending themselves from beasts that are attacking them. Like the XVII-century Neapolitan pattern discussed at the end of Chapter 13, the designs resemble the classic Portuguese ones far more closely than do those of the Roman pattern, without coinciding either with them or with those of the Neapolitan cards. The suit cards all have indices at top and bottom, but the Coins suit is represented by the letter D for Denari instead of O for Ori. The Kings, Cavalli and Maids, unlike their later counterparts, all have indices: the letters R and C are used for the first two, and D for Donna (rather than F for Fantesca) for the Maids. As on the Roman cards, neither the Queens nor the 10s bear indices. On the numeral cards, the numeral precedes the letter for the suit, instead of following it, as on the Roman cards; this last feature is unchanged in the later pattern. The Tarocco siciliano, even in its later form, can truly be regarded as belonging to the 'Portuguese' system. In fact, since the Portuguese themselves abandoned that system in favour of the French one, it is its sole remaining representative in Europe.

There are also considerable differences between the trumps of the earlier and of the later patterns. In the earlier pattern, they bear Roman rather than Arabic numerals. The earlier version of the lowest, unnumbered, trump is labelled POVERTA instead of MISERIA, and the box held by the beggar is labelled INI. On the earlier form of trump IIII the banner is labelled COSTANZA (Constancy). On trump XI, the man was hung by the neck from a gibbet, not the branch of a tree, in the earlier version. On trump XVIII, the blue globe held up

by Atlas was covered with stars, identifying it clearly with the celestial realm. Finally, trump XX bore the inscription GIOVE (Jupiter). Its design differed completely from that of its later counterpart. Jupiter was riding through the air on the back of his eagle, whose wings were outspread; he had his arm around a youthful figure, presumably Ganymede.

These earlier designs clear away some obscurities. The trump designs are plainly influenced by those of the Minchiate pack, which was in fact introduced into Sicily at the same time as the Tarot pack: the Sicilian trump 14, *il Vascello* (the Ship), reproduces Minchiate trump XXI, but its presence is still enigmatic. Trumps XVIII and XX, on the other hand, are simply classicised versions of the Minchiate Mondo and Trombe. Jupiter riding through the air on his eagle has a strong visual resemblance to the angel on the Minchiate Trombe card flying over the city. By the time the later standard pattern came to be devised, the Minchiate pack was no longer in use in Sicily, and this association had come to be forgotten. There was no Angel in the Sicilian Tarot pack, only Giove.

We owe information about the early history of Tarot in Sicily to Francesco Maria Emanuele e Gaetani, Marchese di Villabianca (1720-1802). He was a Sicilian patriot interested in every aspect of Sicilian life. He published two books, *La Sicilia Nobile* (five vols., 1754-9) and *Notizie storiche intorno agli antichi uffici del Regno di Sicilia* (1776). But his major output was unpublished: 25 volumes of manuscript diaries and 48 volumes of manuscript *Opuscoli*, covering every aspect of Sicilian life, are preserved in the Biblioteca Comunale of Palermo. One of these *Opuscoli* concerns games, and it is of course that which provides us with information about the history of Tarot in Sicily.

Two entries concern us, on Tarocchi and on Gallerini: as Villabianca explains, 'Gallerini' was the name in Sicily for the game of Minchiate, since the latter word had obscene connotations for Sicilians. If Villabianca's information is correct, the game of Tarocchi did not spread to Sicily from the Kingdom of Naples; he tells us that the two games of Tarocchi and of Gallerini were

introduced into Sicily in 1662 or 1663 by the Viceroy Francesco Gaetani, Duke of Sermoneta (viceroy from 1662 to 1667); the game and cards of Tarocchi, he says, were often known as 'little Gallerini'. Villabianca explains that he used to play both games, but that he had given up playing in 1766 because of his deteriorating eyesight. Unfortunately, Villabianca does not give a precise account of the rules of either game, although he mentions certain features which we shall attempt to elucidate later in this chapter. But he makes several statements that help us to understand the history. In his youth, Villabianca says, the Tarot pack contained figures of the Devil and, in an obscure and not fully legible phrase, of the fate of the soul (*il novissimo dell'[anima]*); but they displeased the players, and at the expense of the Duchessa Massa, Rosalia Caccamo, these were changed into the Ship (*il Vascello*) and the Tower.<sup>3</sup> We must suppose that trump XV, which subsequently showed a Tower not in process of destruction, originally resembled Minchiate trump XV, showing a woman being dragged into hell by a demon. Rosalia Caccamo was the wife of Cristoforo Massa, Duke of Casteldaci. She probably paid for these changes to be made in about 1750. Villabianca tells us that the game of Gallerini was becoming rare at the time he was writing, which was probably in about 1786. The game of Tarocchi was usually played four-handed, he says. For the three-handed game, known as Tarocchini, the pack was reduced by the omission of the lowest cards. He does not say how many were omitted, but we may take it that this explains the reduction of the pack from 78 to 63 cards. Presumably, after Villabianca's time, the three-handed game gained so much popularity that cardmakers stopped making 78-card packs. Sicily shares with France the distinction of ranking the numeral cards, in all four suits, from 10

<sup>3</sup> A tempi della mia età Villabianca rappresentavasi ion queste Carte di Tarocchi le figure del demonio e del novissimo dell'[anima], ma perché questi davan piuttosto motivi di tristezza ai Giuocatori che [...] fur<sup>o</sup> aboliti, e cambiati nelle figure del Vascello, e della Torre a spese [della] duchessa Massa Rosalia Caccamo, che nè fe' fare apposta spente. Square brackets indicate words difficult or impossible to read. The curious phrase "a' tempi della mia età Villabianca" also occurs in the section on chess, where it refers to the reign, from 1755 to 1773, but effectively only to 1768, of the Viceroy Fogliani.

downwards, so that those from Ace to 3 or 4 were really the lowest in each suit. It is interesting that, while the full 78-card pack survived, the reduced pack was known as *Tarocchini*, just as the 62-card pack was known as *Tarocchino* in Bologna. Villabianca's account thus resolves certain perplexities: the elimination of the lowest-numbered cards of the suits and the presence of the Ship where we should expect the Devil. It does not explain the most puzzling feature – the presence of an unnumbered card below the trump I: Villabianca refers to the card known as *la Povertà* without comment or special explanation.

The Tarot pack introduced in 1662 probably had suit cards of 'Portuguese' type, since it is most likely to have come from Rome; although Gaetani had previously served a term as Viceroy of Milan, Sermoneta is close to Rome and it was the Roman version of the game that he probably knew best. (This may help to explain the absence of the Pope and Popess from the Sicilian pack.) One might well suppose that this would account for the use of the Portuguese system for the suit cards of the Sicilian Tarot pack. But the supposition would be mistaken: the Portuguese system was already in use in Sicily for the regular pack before 1662. This is proved by a set of seven cards in the Museo Pitré, dated 1639. They are of indisputably Portuguese type, and consist of the Cavallo and 7 of Swords, the King and 6 of Batons, the 7 and 4 of Cups and the Ace of Coins (with a dragon): all have indices, enclosed in rectangles, in the centre at top and bottom, with the numerals preceding the letters for the suits (D for Coins), and with A for the Ace. The Portuguese system was therefore already in use in Sicily when the game of Tarot was introduced; certainly during the XVII century, and very likely before that. Whether the invention of the indices occurred in Sicily or in Rome we cannot say. It seems somewhat more probable that it spread from Rome to Sicily than in the reverse direction; in either case, it bypassed the Kingdom of Naples.

A famous complete 48-card regular pack of Portuguese type in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris supplies confirmation to the hypothesis that the

Portuguese pattern was used in Sicily for regular packs in the XVII century. The maker's name, A. Infirrerera, is on the 4 of Cups, and the date, 1693, on the 2 of Coins. The Maids of Swords and Batons are fighting off beasts attacking them. The cards have the familiar indices at top and bottom, with D used for the Donne (Maids) and for Denari (Coins), and numerals preceding letters. All the Kings bear Maltese crosses on their breasts, and the 4 of Coins shows the coat of arms of Adrien de Vignacourt, Grand Master of the Order of St. John of Malta from 1690 to 1697. It has therefore long been assumed that the pack was made for Malta, perhaps for the Knights of St. John themselves. A very similar, but incomplete, pack is in the U.S.P.C.C. Playing-Card Museum in Cincinnati: the Kings again bear Maltese crosses on their breasts, and the backs are inscribed LA FORTUNA, evidently the maker's trade-name. In the absence of the 4 of Cups and 2 of Coins, there is no date. We can assign these two packs to a distinct Maltese standard pattern. A remarkable recent discovery has brought to light a great many other examples of the Maltese pattern and has shown that Infirrerera himself in fact lived and worked in Malta, since one card bears his name on its back. So far as appears, none of the cards discovered is from a Tarot pack: but what makes the Maltese pattern of interest to us is that, apart from its distinctively Maltese features, it closely resembles the suit cards of the older Sicilian Tarot pattern. While it was occupied by the Knights of St. John, Malta continued to remain closely connected to Sicily: in the Maltese pattern, we are surely seeing something deviating only slightly from just the kind of playing-card pack used in XVII-century Sicily.

The discovery was made by Dr Joseph Schirò, Director of Studies at the New Malta Centre for Restoration, subsequently assisted by Mr Trevor Denning. The original find was of 26 cards from eleven different packs kept between two glass plates marked "Cards used by Knights 1609". A notice in the bulletin of the Malta Historical Society has brought many more examples of the Maltese pattern to light: two complete 40-card packs, some wood blocks, and a very large number



of individual cards, whose backs bear various names including LA FORTUNA; a few of these, ranking 8 or 9, must have come from 48-card packs. One 2 of Coins bears the date 1696. The most surprising fact is that one of the complete packs carries on the 4 of Coins the coat of arms of the Grand Master de Rohan, who reigned from 1775 to 1797. Evidently the Maltese pattern survived until the last quarter of the XVIII century, by which time the Portuguese system had surely long been abandoned in Sicily itself in favour of the Spanish one for use in regular packs. It seems that Malta was the last part of Europe other than Portugal itself to have gone on using time the Portuguese system for anything but Tarot packs.

The game of Tarocchi seems to have been popular throughout Sicily during the XVIII century, particularly among the aristocracy. An edict of 1736 declares the game lawful, if played simply for enjoyment (*per semplice divertimento*), that is, not for money. An edict of 1743 regulated the manufacture and sale of tarocchi and playing cards. A four-page XVIII-century booklet, *Il Giuoco dei Tarocchi*, discovered by Franco Pratesi, moralises the game and describes it as much played in Palermo. A document also found by Pratesi shows that Sicilian taxes on Tarot cards in the years 1838-52 amounted to a modest 2% of the total of taxes on playing cards. An edict of King Ferdinand II in 1844 mentioned tarocchi as one of four types of playing cards permitted. We know that various different Sicilian cardmakers produced Tarot packs in the XIX century – A. Cimino, Gaetano Cimino, Lorenzo di Lorenzo, ‘La Fortuna’ and the unnamed maker of a sheet of the early 1840s in the collection of Signor Silvio Berardi of Bologna. Players at Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto say – or used to say – that the game was brought to their town at the beginning of the XX century by players from Palermo. It seems that Tarot remained well known in Sicily from 1662 until the 1900s.

It is not well known now on the island. Hardly anyone in Palermo, or in most Sicilian cities and towns, has ever heard of it. The Tarot tide has gone out:

but it has left four rock pools – four small towns where the game continues to be played and to be cherished as a local tradition; the players in each town seem at best dimly aware that the game is played in any of the other three towns. The four towns are Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto, Tortorici, Calatafimi and Mineo. In these, and nowhere else, the game of Tarocchi is played in different ways but in accordance with common basic rules. In the rest of the chapter we shall describe the game as played in each of these four places, and then revert to hypotheses about the manner of play in the time of Villabianca.

### General rules of Sicilian Tarocchi

#### Terminology

Trump 20 is called *Giove* (Jupiter) and trump 19 is called *la Palla* or *Balla* (the Ball) or *l'Atlante* (Atlas). Trump 1 is called *i Picciotti* (the little ones) or *i Bagotti*. The Fool is called *il Fuggitivo* (the Fugitive): in Sicilian *u Fujutu* (stress on the second syllable). The lowest trump is called *la Miseria*. Trumps are called collectively *trionfi*, *briscole* or *numeri*. The top five trumps, from the 16 (the Star) to the 20 (Giove), are called collectively *arie*. The Maids (the lowest of the four court cards) are called *Donne*.

#### Point-values

The cards are always counted in threes. Two odd empty cards count 1 point, one odd empty card counts nothing. The individual point-values differ from those in all other forms of Tarot; they are:

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Trump 20 (Giove)      | 10 points |
| Trump 19 (la Palla)   | 5 points  |
| Trump 18 (il Sole)    | 5 points  |
| Trump 17 (la Luna)    | 5 points  |
| Trump 16 (la Stella)  | 5 points  |
| Trump 1 (i Picciotti) | 10 points |
| The Fuggitivo         | 10 points |
| Each King             | 5 points  |
| Each Queen            | 4 points  |
| Each Cavallo          | 3 points  |
| Each Donna            | 2 points  |

There are 5 points in addition for winning the last trick. There are thus 109 points in all. Cards worth 10 points are called collectively *diecine* or *decine*; those worth 5 points are called *cinquine*.

#### *Discard and play*

A pack of 63 cards is normally used, omitting the Ace of Coins. In all four suits, the 10 ranks immediately below the Donna, followed by the 9 and so on downwards. The Miseria is the lowest trump, ranking below the trump 1 (Picciotti). When a discard is made, cards worth 10 or 5 points may never be discarded, although court cards below the King can be; trumps cannot be discarded unless they have to be, but, if they are, they do not need to be declared or shown. The usual rules of play are followed, and the Fuggitivo serves as Excuse *without* exchange; it is not played to the centre of the table, but simply added face down to the pile of cards won in tricks. If the player or side has so far won no tricks, it is placed face up until a trick is won; if this never happens, it must be surrendered at the end of the hand to whoever won the trick to which it was played. The Fuggitivo may not be led to a trick, save when it is perforce led to the last trick; in that case, the suit in which that trick is played is determined by the card played by the second player.

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Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto lies on the north coast of Sicily, in the province of Messina. The game is probably a comparative newcomer there; since, unlike elsewhere, the Ace and 4 of Coins are sometimes both used in play, it must have arrived after 1862, when that card was first added to the 63-card pack. Tradition dates the introduction of the game to the very early years of the XX century. But enthusiastic players remain faithful to it.

#### **14.1 Three-handed Tarocchi (Barcellona, present day)**

A 63-card pack is used, including the Ace, but not the 4, of Coins. The dealer gives 20 cards to each of the three players in four rounds of five, and puts the last

three cards, called *il monte* (the mountain, in Sicilian *u munti*), face down in the middle of the table. The player to the dealer's right may then say either "Vado solo" or "Passo". If he passes, the next player has the same choice. If either goes solo, the bidding is over; the solo player picks up the three cards of the *monte*, shows them to his two opponents, adds them to his hand and discards three; he will then play alone against the other two who are temporary partners. In all cases the player to the right of the solo player leads to the first trick. If both the first two players pass, the dealer has three options. He may pick up the *monte* and say "Questa partita giocatevela insieme" ("You must play this hand as partners"), meaning that he will go solo. Or he may take the *monte* but indicate that each of the three players is to play for himself. In both cases the dealer shows the cards of the *monte* to the other two and discards, the discard of course belonging to him at the end of the hand; and in both cases the player to the right of leads to the first trick. Finally, the dealer may pass without picking up the *monte*; he does so by throwing down his hand, in which case the others also throw in their hands and there is a new deal by the next dealer.

When a Solo is played, the opponents place the cards they win in tricks face down in a single pile. When either of the opponents has the lead, he may inform his partner (and, of course, the solo player) of his possession of the Giove. If he has the Giove and another high trump, he may use a conventional expression to convey the fact. If he has the Giove and either the 19 (Palla) or the 18 (Sole), he may indicate this by saying, "Batto" ('I strike'). If he has the Giove but not the 19 or 18, he may say simply, "Ho il 20" ("I have the 20"). To show that he does not have the Giove, he may say "Non batto".

At the end of the hand, the solo player has won if he has more than 55 points. In this case, he marks a positive score of four times the difference between his point-total and 55; the opponents each record a negative score of twice the difference between their combined point-total and 54. The three scores will thus add up to 0. Conversely, if the solo player has less than 55 points, he

records a negative score of four times the difference from 55, while each opponent records, as a positive score, twice the difference between their combined point-total and 54. If the solo player has exactly 55 points, nobody scores.

When the first two players pass and each plays for himself, the dealer marks the difference, positive or negative, between his point-total and 37 points, while each of the other two marks the difference, positive or negative, between his point-total and 36 points.

### *Variants*

Some play that if the first two players pass in the bidding, the dealer has no right to go solo, but must choose between annulling the deal by throwing down his hand without picking up the *monte* and taking the *monte* and letting each player play for himself, the player to his right leading to the first trick.

Some allow other conventional expressions whereby a player may inform his partner of a strong hand. One who has the Giove and two of the 19, 18 and 17, may say, "Batto forte" ('I strike hard'); if he has the Giove and three other *arie*, (16-19), he says, "Sfondo" ('I break'); and if he is lucky enough to have all five *arie*, he says, "Sfondo i tavoli" ('I break the tables').

Some do not require the *monte* to be shown.

For some the declarer of a solo leads to the first trick.

Some play that a solo player receives or pays only double, not four times, the difference between his point-total and 55, and that the opponents each pay or receive the simple difference between their combined point-total and 54.

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The next game is the only form of Sicilian Tarocchi in which the whole pack, as now manufactured, is used.

### 14.2 Four-handed Tarocchi (Barcellona, present day)

A 64-card pack is used, including both the 4 and the Ace of Coins. The game may be played either with fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table, or with each of the four players playing for himself; the procedure in either case is the same. The dealer gives 16 cards to each player, in four rounds of four. There are therefore no extra cards and no discard. The player to the dealer's right leads to the first trick. At the end of the hand, the cards are as usual counted in threes; two odd cards count 1 point, one odd card counts nothing. When there are partners, the winning side simply marks, as a positive score, the difference between its point-total and that of the opposing side. When each plays for himself, each marks, as a positive or negative score, the difference between his point-total and 27 points. (This will not always have the effect that the scores add up to 0.)

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Tortorici is also in the province of Messina, but lies a considerable distance inland. The game has clearly been played there for a long time. The name 'Vanto', used for the three-handed game, properly belongs to an older form that has now died out. There are many circles of tarocchi players in Tortorici, and many variations of rules among them.

### 14.3 Vanto (Tortorici, present day)

#### *Deal and bidding*

This is a game for three players. A pack of 63 cards is used; nowadays the Ace of Coins is retained as the lowest card of that suit and the 4 is set aside. As in game 14.1, the dealer gives 20 cards to each player in four rounds of five, and puts the last three cards face down in the middle of the table to form the *monte* or *munti*. Each player in turn, beginning with the one on the dealer's right, may now make a bid or pass. There are only two positive bids, "Chiamo" and "Vado solo" ("Vaju sulu" in Sicilian). The second is higher than the first; it is legal to make it even if

no one has said "Chiamo", but there is little advantage in doing so. In practice, the player to the dealer's right almost invariably opens the bidding by saying "Chiamo". If an earlier player has said "Chiamo", a subsequent player who is content to pass says "Bene". If no bid of "Vado solo" is made, a player who has said "Chiamo" becomes declarer and must play at that level, that of a *Chiamata*. But if, after a bid of "Chiamo" has been made, a subsequent player wishes to make a positive bid, he must of course say "Vado solo"; the player who bid "Chiamo" then has the option of either saying "Va bene", so allowing the subsequent player to become declarer in a Solo game (*Solità*), or saying "Solo io", thus asserting his prior right to become declarer in a Solo. Both in a Solo and in a *Chiamata*, the declarer takes the three cards of the *monte* and discards three under the usual constraints.

### *Play*

In a Solo the declarer of course plays against the other two who are temporary partners and keep the cards they win in a single pile; the declarer leads to the first trick. In a *Chiamata*, each plays for himself; the player to the *declarer's* right (who will normally be the one to the dealer's left) leads to the first trick. Play takes place under the usual rules.

### *Scoring*

At the end of the hand (*jucata*), the cards won in tricks (*pigliate*) are counted in threes. In a *Chiamata*, the declarer marks as his score, positive or negative, the difference between his point-total and 37, while each of the other two marks the difference, positive or negative, between his total and 36. In a *Solità*, the declarer marks twice the difference, positive or negative, between his total and 55, while each of the opponents marks as his score, positive or negative, the difference between their combined point-total and 54. If the solo player makes *cappotto*, that is, wins all the tricks, the opponents must surrender the *Fuggitivo* (here called in Sicilian *u Frustatu*); of course he could not have won all the tricks if he had

had that card himself. In this case his point-total will be 109, and he will score 108 game points (twice 54).

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There is also a four-handed game, although the three-handed one is preferred. The use of the Ace instead of the 4 of Coins does not indicate a recent introduction of Tarocchi into Tortorici, but only a disregard for tradition.

#### 14.4 Four-handed Tarocchi (Tortorici, present day)

The game is played with 63 cards, including the Ace but not the 4 of Coins. There are fixed partnerships, partners facing each other across the table. The dealer gives 15 cards to each player in three rounds of five cards. In each of the first two rounds of the deal, the dealer may, at his choice, expose one card given to each player, in order to increase information about the players' holdings. During the course of the deal, the player to the dealer's right may, if he chooses, tell his partner about important cards that he holds. If he does not exercise this right, no other player may do the same; but, if he does so, the dealer's partner may tell about important cards he has. It is not lawful, however, to announce possession of more than two Kings, even if one has three or all four. If the player to the dealer's right has spoken, the third player has the option of saying either "Mischio" (shuffle), indicating that he would like to abandon the hand, or "Tengo" (hold). If he says "Tengo", the dealer completes the deal and the hand is then played; if he says "Mischio", the dealer may either throw his hand in, reshuffle and redeal, or continue the deal, in which case the hand is played out. At the end of the deal, the dealer takes the three remaining cards for himself, without showing them to the other players, and discards three. The player to the right of the dealer leads to the first trick. At the end of the play, the dealer and his partner record, as game points, the excess (if any) of their combined point-total over 55, and their opponents record the excess (if any) of theirs over 54; a couple



that has not attained the required total scores nothing. The rubber (*partita*) ends when one couple has gained 50 game points (or 51, by initial agreement).

### *Variant*

Some allow that if, after two rounds of the deal, the player to the dealer's right has announced good cards that he has, the dealer's partner may cede the right to do this to the dealer. In this case, the third player then has the right to say either "Mischio" or "Tengo"; if he says "Mischio", the dealer's partner now decides whether the deal is to continue or the hands are thrown in for a new deal.

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A more complicated form of Vanto, which has the true claim to that name, was played in Tortorici up about 1930. We owe a description of it to the great kindness of the late Avvocato Gaetano Franchina, who had played it in his youth and preserved a wonderful memory of its rules.

### **14.5** Vanto (Tortorici, original form, up to c. 1930)

#### *Deal and discard*

There were three players. The 63-card pack was used, including the 4 but not the Ace of Coins. There was a plate, constituting a pool, to which all contributed equally at the start of play, and whenever it became empty, a sum equivalent to 10 game points. The dealer gave 20 cards to each player in four rounds of five cards each; he had the right, at the end of the first round of the deal, to look at the card at the bottom of the pack. After dealing all the cards, the dealer placed the last three cards face down in the centre of the table. It was to be agreed before the deal began whether the player who obtained these three cards had to show them to the others or not. At the end of each of the first three rounds of the deal, any player had the right to declare that he wished to play Solo; after the final round, no one any longer had this right. A player who declared "Solo" after the first round of the deal was called a *solista di cinque*; one who did so after the second

round a *solista di dieci*, and one who did so after the third round a *solista di quindici*. One who had declared "Solo" and had in his hand all three cards worth 10 points – the Giove, Fuggitivo and Bagotti – had the right to declare *scommessa* either in the same round of the deal or in a later ones, but not in the last round of the deal. This meant that he undertook to have all three *decine* among his tricks at the end of play. Since the Giove and Fuggitivo could not be lost, this amounted to a declaration to bring the Bagotti home. When the deal was finished, a player who had declared Solo took the three cards in the centre of the table, showing them to the others or not according to agreement, and discarded three under the usual constraints. He then had the right, if he wished, to declare an intention of winning the last trick. Whether he did so or no, he then led to the first trick. If no Solo had been declared, the player on the dealer's right said "Chiamo" – there being no point in passing – and took the three cards in the same way, discarding three. In this case he then led to the first trick.

#### *Play and scoring*

Play followed the usual rules, and was conducted in complete silence; no signalling was allowed. A Solo player was of course playing against the other two players in temporary partnership. If he captured a *cinquina* – a King or an *aria* (trump 16 to 19) – from the opponents, each immediately paid him 5 game points; if he lost one of these cards to them, he immediately paid each of them 5 game points. He must make 55 points to win the hand. A *solista di quindici*, who had announced Solo after the third round of the deal, received from each of the other two players, if he won, as many game points as he had points above 55; if he lost, he had to pay each of them as many game points as he had points below 55. For a *solista di dieci*, who had announced Solo after the second round of the deal, these payments were doubled; for a *solista di cinque*, who had announced Solo after the first round of the deal, they were trebled. If the Solo player had announced that he would win the last trick, and did so, then, as well as the 5 points for the last trick, he took all the contents of the pool on the central plate; if

he failed, he doubled the contents of the pool. If he had announced the *scommessa*, and succeeded, each opponent paid him an additional 5 game points if he made the announcement after the third round of the deal, 10 if he made it after the second round, and 15 if he made it after the first round. If he failed, he paid each opponent the same amount. If, at the end of the hand, the Solo player had all four Kings among his tricks, each opponent paid him an additional 10 game points; if the opponents had between them all four Kings among their tricks, he paid each of them 10 game points. The same rule applied to having all four *arie* other than the Giove (trumps 16 to 19). If no Solo was announced, each played for himself. The player on the dealer's right, who had said "Chiamo" and received the three extra cards, received or paid, in all, as many game points as the difference between his point-total and 37; each of the others received or paid, in all, the difference from 36. Any player who captured a King or an *aria* from one of the others was immediately paid 5 game points by that other. An oddity of this game was the so-called *ternone*, consisting of trumps 13, 14 and 15. A player who had this combination in his hand could declare it before first playing one of them by saying "Questa vi saluta"; he then received 5 game points from each of the other players, even if he was one of the two opponents of a Solo player; he did not have to bring these trumps home in order to gain this bonus.

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The hill town of Mineo, in the province of Catania, was once the capital of the hero Ducezio (c. 489-440 B.C.), the leader of the Siculi against the Greeks. It has preserved a variety of Tarocchi that must resemble the game as played in the time of Villabianca more closely than that played in any other of the four towns. There are also a few players in nearby Grammichele and Palagonia, who play after the manner of Mineo. The three-handed game is the more popular form.

#### 14.6 Three-handed Tarocchi (Mineo, present day)

##### *Nomenclature and deal*

A 63-card pack is used, without the Ace of Coins (called *a siccia* = the cuttlefish in Sicilian). Trumps are called *trunfi*, trump 19 *a Badda* and trump 2 *u paparièddu*. Batons are called *mazze* and empty cards without point-value *scartini*. The dealer, called *cartaro*, gives 20 cards to each of the three players in four rounds of five cards; before starting, he may look at the bottom card of the pack. Having finished the deal, he puts the last three cards face down in the centre of the table to form the *monte*, and at this stage may look at all three. After each of the first three rounds of the deal, the players' hands may be thrown in and the deal abandoned, but only if all three players agree. At the end of a round of the deal, a player may indicate his desire to bring the deal to an end by saying "Mischio" (Shuffle), or by holding his cards together and scraping them along the side of the table; but one who wishes the deal to continue can make sure that it does by saying, "Altre cinque" ('Another five'). If all agree to abandon the deal, the next dealer in rotation starts to give out the cards. After the first round of the deal, a player may say "Vado solo", thus becoming the declarer in a Solo game. In this case, the deal must be completed; before giving out any more cards, the dealer hands to the Solo declarer the three bottom cards of the pack, which he then shows to the other two players. Such an event is called *stata* (dark) in Sicilian.

##### *Bidding, discard and declarations*

When the deal has been completed, one who declared a Solo after the first round of the deal must discard three cards under the usual constraints; having done so, he says "Fatto è". If no such declaration was made, each player in turn has the right to become *solista* (declarer), playing alone against the other two in temporary partnership; this is done by saying "Vado io" (or equivalently "Vado solo" or "Vediamo chi c'è"). Starting with the player to the right of the dealer,

each may either pass or say “Vado io”; as soon as this is said by any player, the bidding ceases, there being no higher bids. If all pass, there is a new deal by the next dealer. If there is a declarer, he takes the three cards of the *monte*; unless he is the dealer, he shows them to the other two players and then discards three cards under the usual constraints, but the dealer need not show them. In practice, a declarer never actually says “Vado io”, but simply picks up the three extra cards, thereby making plain his intention. Before play begins, the *solista* has the right to announce a *scommessa*. By this he undertakes to have all three *decine* – the Giove, Fuggitivo and the Picciotti – among the cards he has won in tricks at the end of the hand. The first two he can only have if he has them both in his hand already, and is then certain to have them at the end: so his declaration expresses his intention either to bring home or to capture the trump 1. Whether the declarer has announced a *scommessa* or not, either opponent then has the right to announce *rivanto*: this is an undertaking that one or other opponent will win the last trick.

### *Play*

The player to the right of the *declarer* leads to the first trick. Play is under the usual rules. Note that it is never lawful to lead the Fuggitivo, except perforce to the last trick; this can happen only if the player holding the Fuggitivo finds it unexpectedly impossible to get off lead. An opponent of the declarer may suggest to his partner what suit to lead by means of conventional expressions. Thus he may say “faglio” to advise him to lead a card of a suit in which the declarer is void; “lo stesso gioco” advises a lead in the same suit as the preceding trick, “gira”, “altro gioco” or “un gioco nuovo” a lead in a new suit, and “un gioco nuovo nuovo” a lead in Coins. The suit to be led may never be actually named, but the expressions “il primo gioco” and “il secondo gioco” may be used to indicate respectively the suit first led and the suit next led. Moreover, the player may add “mi fici u Re” or “mi fici a Regina” to convey, respectively, that he has the King or the Queen of the suit whose lead he is advising. The player with the

lead may say “posso tornare” to indicate that he is ready to lead the same suit. When one opponent has made his lead, his partner may ask to be told how many cards of that suit, and what court cards, he still holds, by saying “Quanto ti ni mancano?”. One of the opponents may say “trunfu” to advise his partner to lead a trump; the partner may ask “grossu o picciriddu?” to find whether it should be a high trump or a low one. The partner may add “mi vanto” to convey that he has the Giove, or “mi rivanto” that he does not have it. Holding one’s cards before one’s chest indicates possession of a Queen.

### Scoring

At the end of the hand, the cards won by the two sides are counted in threes, with the usual 5 points for the last trick. If the declarer had the Fuggitivo (for which no exchange is given), he will have one odd empty card, which counts nothing. If the opponents had the Fuggitivo, the declarer will have two odd empty cards. If he has 54 points on the other cards, he has obtained the minimum point-total needed to win, called the *rimattura*, namely ‘54 points and two cards’ (more simply expressed, he has 55 points). Game points are assigned to the players in accordance with several different feats achieved in play. If the declarer has achieved the feat, he receives the premium from each of the other two; if the opponents have achieved it between them, they each receive the same premium from him. The various feats are:

- rimattura* – 1 game point for winning the hand (the declarer has won if he has at least 54 points and two cards, the opponents have won if he has less);
- vanto e rivanto* – 1 game point for winning the last trick if the opponents did not announce “rivanto”, 2 game points if they did;
- pigliata* – 1 game point for each capture of any of trumps 19, 18, 17, 16 and 1 (these premiums are paid immediately the capture takes place);
- scommessa* – if the declarer has announced “scommessa”, and given that he has the Giove and the Fuggitivo, 1 game point to him if he captures the trump 1 or brings it home and 1 to each opponent if they capture it or bring it home;

*quattro Re* – 1 game point to a side that has all four Kings in its tricks;

*arie* – 1 game point to a side that has all four *arie* below the Giove (trumps 19, 18, 17 and 16) in its tricks, and 2 game points if it has the Giove as well.

If the declarer announced Solo after the first round of the deal, all premiums are doubled.

#### *Variant*

In Palagonia, a player is allowed to announce that he will play solo after any but the final round of the deal. If he does, all scores are doubled.

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A four-handed form of Tarocchi is also played in Mineo.

#### 14.7 Four-handed Tarocchi (Mineo, present day)

The game is similar to the three-handed form 14.6. Each of the four players receives 15 cards in three rounds of five cards. It is possible for a player to say “Solo” after the first round of the deal; he will then be declarer in a Solo game. In this case he is immediately given the last three cards of the pack, which he shows to the other players; he discards three cards under the usual constraints when the deal has been completed. If no one said “Solo” after the first round of the deal, then, when the deal has been completed, the last three cards are placed face down in the middle of the table. The bidding then takes place. Starting with the player to the dealer’s right, each player may pass or make a positive bid. The lower of the two positive bids is “Chiamo”, the higher “Solo”; once “Chiamo” has been said, a later player must say “Solo” or pass; but “Solo” may also be used as an opening bid. Bidding ends when anyone bids “Solo” or all four players have spoken. If the declarer said “Solo” during the round of bidding, he takes the three cards of the *monte*, showing them to the other players, and discards three under the usual constraints. A Solo declarer of course plays alone against the other three. The player to his right leads to the first trick. If the declarer said “Chiamo”, he calls a card that he does not have, which can be the Giove or any

other *aria* down to the 16. The player holding this card becomes his partner but does not announce the fact. It is lawful for the declarer to call a card that he has in his hand, in which case he will play alone against the other three, who will not at first realise this. Only after having called a card does the declarer take the three cards of the *monte*; if the card he called proves to be among them, he is compelled to play alone against the other three. When the declarer has discarded, the player to his right leads to the first trick. It is customary for a player, during the round of bidding, not to say "Chiamo", but to name the card he intends to call, say "Giove" or "Palla"; of course he may be overbid by another player saying "Solo". If all four players pass in the round of bidding, the player who holds the Giove takes the three cards of the *monte*, showing them to the other players, and discards three under the usual constraints. He then calls the highest trump that he does not have, and its holder becomes his partner without announcing the fact. In every case, the player who received the three cards of the *monte* has the right to announce a *scommessa*, and any of his opponents the right to say "rivanto". The declarer, together with his partner if any, must make at least 54 points plus two cards to win the *rimattura*. The scoring is exactly as in game 14.6: when one plays against three, the declarer pays or is paid by each opponent; when there are two couples, each member of a couple pays or is paid by one member of the other. As before, all scores are doubled when Solo was declared after the first round of the deal.

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In Calatafimi, in the province of Trapani, Tarocchi is enthusiastically played, principally at the Circolo 15 maggio, which takes its name from the date on which, in 1860, Garibaldi's Thousand defeated 3,000 Bourbon troops on a plain a little to the west of Calatafimi. At Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto, Tortorici and Mineo the Tarocco siciliano manufactured by Modiano is now used. But these are the only places on the island where that pack is sold for use in play; the Sicilian representative of Modiano has assured us of that. Yet there is an



enthusiastic school of Tarocchi in Calatafimi in the province of Trapani; the town is now officially known as Calatafimi Segesta, after the nearby ruined ancient town with its well-preserved temple and theatre. The players use the Tarocco piemontese, very different from the Tarocco siciliano. The explanation is that, when the firm of Guglielmo Murari ceased production in 1929, players in Calatafimi never became aware of the Sicilian Tarot cards produced by Concetta Campione of Catania. They therefore took to playing with the Tarocco piemontese as the best substitute they could find. Although they have now become aware of the Tarocco siciliano manufactured by Modiano, they continue to play with the Tarocco piemontese, preferring the larger size of the cards. They discard the Ace to 3 of Coins, and the Ace to 4 of the other three suits. They rank the trumps in numerical order, from the 1 up to the 21, but, in defiance of the images they depict and the names they bear, call them by the names of the trumps of the Tarocco siciliano that correspond in rank. Thus the 21 (the World) is called Giove, and the 20 (the Angel) the Palla. Trump 1 (the Bagatto) is called the Miseria and is without point-value and trump 2 (the Popess) is called the Picciotti and is worth 10 points. This might be called the Popess's revenge. She has so often been suppressed from various forms of the Tarot pack;<sup>4</sup> but here she has been promoted to have a high point-value. We may say that the players of Tarocchi in Calatafimi play spiritually with the Tarocco siciliano, but physically with the Tarocco piemontese, and we shall for convenience describe the Calatafimi game as if it were still played with the Tarocco siciliano, instead of with its ghost. Where the players in Mineo have most faithfully preserved the original form of the game, as recorded by the marchese di Villabianca, those in

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<sup>4</sup> She was suppressed from the Minchiate pack, rather than being secularised, like the Pope; she was suppressed, with the other *Papi*, from the Tarocco bolognese in 1725, when the *Papi* were replaced by Moors; she was replaced by Juno (and the Pope by Jupiter) in the Tarot de Besançon, used by German-speaking players outside Italy; and she was replaced by the Spanish Captain (and the Pope by Bacchus) in the so-called Belgian Tarot.

Calatafimi have been the most inventive in introducing new variations. Their preferred form is that with four players.

#### 14.8 Four-handed Tarocchi (Calatafimi, present day)

##### *Deal and bargaining*

Suits are known as *merci*; that of Coins is called *Oremi* or *Aremi*. Before dealing, the dealer may look at the bottom card of the pack. He then gives ten cards to each of the four players in two rounds of five. The players look at their cards, and there follows an interval of bargaining, to establish agreements, called *patti*, on the level of payments each will make or require to abandon the deal. The players speak in any order; the bargaining is usually opened by a player who has poor cards and offers a certain number of game points, called *marche*, to abandon the deal. (The highest number of game points is normally 8; 10 in an extreme case.) Another player may then offer another such sum; the expression “Mi strico” can be used to indicate that a player does not yet wish to say anything. A player content to abandon the deal without paying or being paid says “Mescolate” (‘Shuffle’), or “Mescolo” if he is the dealer. A player with good cards who has not yet spoken must decide whether or not to accept the total of game points offered and so abandon the deal. If he accepts, he says “Prendo”; if not, he says “Tengo”, and the dealer gives out the last five cards to each player and puts the last three cards face down in the centre of the table.

##### *Example*

Player A offers 6 game points, player B says “Mescolate” and player C offers 2 game points. Player D must now decide whether or not to have the deal abandoned for a payment to him of 8 game points. If he decides to do so, he says “Prendo”: 8 game points are added to his running total, 6 subtracted from A’s and 2 subtracted from C’s. The cards so far dealt are thrown in, and there is a new deal by the same dealer. But if D is not

willing to abandon the deal for 8 game points, he says "Tengo" and the deal is completed.

It can happen that, when fewer than three players have yet spoken, one player feels willing to abandon the deal for a payment less than the total so far offered. If so, he says how many game points he will accept. The last player to speak will have to decide whether or not to accept the payment that remains.

### *Example*

Player A offers 5 game points, and player C offers 4. Player B says he will accept 3 game points. Player D now has to decide whether to accept the abandonment of the deal for a payment to him of 6 game points ( $5 + 4 - 3 = 6$ ). If he will, he says "Prendo"; the deal is abandoned, 5 game points are subtracted from A's running total, 3 added to B's, 4 subtracted from C's and 6 added to D's. If not, he says "Tengo" and the deal is resumed.

### *Bidding*

When all have looked at their cards, the dealer asks if any player wishes to play Solo against the other three. The prior right to do so belongs to the earliest player in anticlockwise rotation from the player on the dealer's right. If any of the three other than the dealer wishes to do so, he picks up the three cards from the centre of the table, shows them to the other players and discards three under the usual constraints. If none of them does, the dealer may choose to play Solo: he picks up the three cards from the centre of the table, but does *not* show them to the other players; he then discards three cards under the usual constraints. If no one wishes to play Solo, the dealer again picks up the three cards without showing them, and discards. There is then a round in which players speak in order to decide partners. Starting with the player to the dealer's right, each player may say either "Twenty" or "Zero". He may say "Twenty" only if he has in his hand cards worth 10 or 5 points each totalling 20 points or over; but he is not obliged to say "Twenty" if he does. If all four players say "Zero", the hands are thrown in and

there is a new deal by the next dealer. As soon as any player has said "Twenty", he becomes the declarer and this part of the procedure comes to an end. The turn to speak now passes to the declarer's right, and each in turn may say either "Fifteen" or "Zero". It is legal for a player to say "Fifteen" only if he has *exactly* 15 points on cards in his hand worth 10 or 5 points each; but again it is not obligatory to do so. The first player to say "Fifteen" becomes the declarer's partner, the remaining two being in temporary partnership. If no one says "Fifteen", the declarer calls a King that he does not have; the player holding this King becomes his partner, but does not reveal the fact. So as to call a King he does not have, he may, if he has all three other Kings, be forced to call the King of a suit in which he is void. But when this does not happen, he must call the King of the shortest suit in his hand in which he does not have the King and is not void; if he has two equally short such suits, he must call the King of that suit in which he has the highest court cards. (E.g. of that suit in which he has the Queen, if he does not have the Queen of the other, or of that in which he has the Queen and Cavallo if he has the Queen but not the Cavallo of the other.) If this rule does not determine his choice, he must call the King of Coins if Coins (Oremi) is one of his shortest suits. (This is because the suit of Coins contains more cards than the others, so that there is less danger that the King will be trumped.) These are obviously strategic principles which have hardened into rules. If the declarer has all four Kings, he calls a Queen, under analogous constraints; if he has all three other Queens, he is compelled to call the Queen of a suit in which he has a bare King (the only card of the suit), but he may not otherwise call the Queen of a suit in which he has a bare King. In calling a Queen, a player is under similar constraints as one calling a King. He must call the Queen of the suit in which he is shortest, but in which he has a card other than the King; if two suits qualify, he must call the Queen of that one in which he has the higher cards; and if they still qualify, he must call the Queen of Coins if that is one of them. If the declarer

calls a Queen which the dealer has discarded, the dealer must say so, and becomes the declarer's partner.

### *Play*

The player to the *declarer's* right leads to the first trick, whether the declarer is playing Solo or has a partner. When it is known who the partners are (that is, unless a King or a Queen was called), partners keep cards won in tricks in a single pile. When the player who holds a called King or Queen first obtains the lead, he is obliged to lead the suit of the called card, though not necessarily the called card itself. The Fuggitivo as usual serves as Excuse without exchange; if the one who played it, together with his partner if any, makes no tricks, it must be surrendered to the opposing side (and is kept face up until it is known that this has not happened). The Fuggitivo cannot be led to a trick (unless perforce to the last trick). A player who has the Giove or the Palla may reveal the fact, when he has the lead, by striking the table and saying "Giove" or "Palla". If he has both, he may say both, or simply strike the table very hard; but he may also say "Giove" and "Palla" at different times. A player may also simply say "Batto" to indicate that he has one or other of these cards, without disclosing which he has. He may also say this when the Giove and Palla have both been played, to indicate that he has the highest trump that has not yet been played.

### *Scoring*

At the end of the hand, the cards won by each side are counted in threes, with the usual 5 points for the last trick. Each player keeps a running total of game points; these must together always add up to 0. The side to which the player belongs who received the three extra cards must make more than 55 points to obtain a positive score; while the other side must make more than 54 points for the same purpose. When a Solo was played, the Solo player scores three times as many game points as he had points above 55 if he won, while his opponents each have a negative score of as many game points as they together had below 54.

Conversely, if the Solo player lost, he has a negative score of three times his deficit from 55, and the opponents each make a positive score equal to their joint excess over 54. If the Solo player made exactly 55 points, no score, positive or negative, is made by anyone. When the players are divided into two pairs, the pair to which the dealer belongs must make more than 55 points to obtain a positive score, while the other pair must make more than 54. Each partner in the winning pair obtains a positive score of as many game points as they together have points in excess of the required total (55 or 54), while each partner in the losing pair receives a negative score equal to the difference of their point-total from that they required. If the pair to which the dealer belongs makes exactly 55 points, no one gains or loses.

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Tarocchi is also played in Calatafimi with three and with only two players; but these are not considered by devotees to be serious games.

#### 14.9 Three-handed Tarocchi (Calatafimi, present day)

The same 63-card pack, cut down from the Tarocco piemontese, is used as for game 14.8. There is no bidding, and each of the three players plays for himself. The dealer gives 20 cards to each player, in four rounds of five each; after the third round of the deal, there is a pause for bargaining to determine whether the deal shall be completed, as in game 14.8. If the deal is not abandoned, the dealer gives out the last five cards to each player and takes the last three cards for himself. When he has discarded, the player to his right leads to the first trick. Play is subject to three special rules. (1) A player who holds the King of a suit must play it to the first trick in that suit. (2) A player who holds the Cavallo of any suit, together with just one numeral card of the suit, must play the Cavallo to the first trick in that suit. (3) A player who holds the lowest court card of a suit (Fante or Donna in the Tarocco siciliano, Fante in the Tarocco piemontese) must play it to any trick in that suit to which the King has already been played. At the

end of the hand, the dealer records a score, positive or negative, equal to the difference between his point-total and 37, and each of the other two players records one equal to the difference between his point-total and 36.

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#### **14.10 Two-handed Tarocchi (Calatafimi, present day)**

The 4 of Coins is discarded, and the game is played with the resultant 62-card pack. The dealer gives 15 cards to his opponent and himself, five cards each at a time. He puts the remaining 32 cards face down in the centre of the table to form a stock. The dealer's opponent leads to the first trick. After each trick, the winner of the trick takes the top card of the stock, shows it to his opponent and adds it to his hand; the other player does the same with the next card of the stock. When the stock is exhausted, the hands are played out. At the end of the hand, the cards are counted in threes; two empty cards count 1 point, one counts nothing. The player with the higher point-total scores the difference between that and his opponent's point-total.

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It is not possible fully to reconstruct the XVIII-century form of the game from the hints given by Villabianca. Nevertheless, from games 14.5, 14.6 and 14.7, we can suggest probable interpretations of those hints.

#### **14.11 XVIII-century Sicilian Tarocchi**

The four-handed game was played with a full pack of 78 cards. It had three forms: one with fixed partnerships, one in which the declarer called a card for a partner, and one in which each player played for himself.<sup>5</sup> The three-handed game was played with the reduced 63-card pack, which was presumably also used for the two-handed game mentioned by Villabianca. We should probably assume

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<sup>5</sup> 'Questo Giuoco di Tarocchi perlo più si suole giocare in quattro a Compagni, o pure a chiamare, e finalmente a modo di guerra che si dice a quadriglia, ove ognuno fa parte da se solo e per suo conto.' Villabianca's *Opuscolo* on games has an entry on Ombre, in which he explains the practice of calling a King for a partner.

that at least the four-handed game was scored like that now played at Mineo: that is to say with one fixed payment for winning the hand, irrespectively of the margin by which it was won, and other fixed payments for achieving various particular feats in play. Villabianca gives the names of these, referring to these at first simply as terms used in the game, but speaking later of them as names of *patti*, that is, of undertakings to achieve particular feats. He adds that there were other *patti*, which he has now forgotten. We here attempt to conjecture what the ones he names were.

*vanto, mi rivanto and Arcirivanto*

We know from game 14.6 that these must have to do with winning the last trick. Either *vanto* is a premium for doing so, or, more probably, it is the announcement of an intention by the declarer (or player who received the three extra cards) that he would do so. *Mi rivanto* must have been an announcement by an opponent of the declarer that *he* would win the last trick; perhaps *Arcirivanto* was a counter-announcement by the declarer to *Mi rivanto*, undertaking that the declarer himself would win it. There would be suitable payments for success or failure.

*vanto coll'aria*

This must have been an announcement of intent to win the last trick with an *aria*; possibly only with an *aria* lower than the Giove.

*vanto colla scommessa*

We know the *scommessa* as an undertaking to have all three cards worth 10 points among one's tricks at the end of play. *Vanto colla scommessa* could be interpreted as an announcement of an intention both to do this and to win the last trick; but it seems more likely to be an undertaking to win the last trick with a card of the *scommessa*, that is to say, either with the Giove or with the Picciotti (obviously it cannot be won with the Fuggitivo).



*fare il vanto colla carta designata*

This must have been the announcement of an intention to win the last trick with some named card. It makes it more probable that a plain *vanto* was not the mere winning of the last trick, but the announcement of an intention to do so.

*andarvi solo*

Literally 'to go there alone', this must have been an of an intention to play alone against the others, perhaps allowed as an alternative to calling a card for a partner in the form of game in which the declarer did that.

*fare tutte le Arie*

Either a bonus for having trumps 16-19 among the cards won in tricks, or the announcement of an intention to gain such a bonus.

*Scommettere per li quattro Re*

There must have been a plain *scommessa* – the announcement of an intention by one who has the Giove and the Fuggitivo to bring home or capture the Picciotti – although Villabianca does not mention it separately. To *scommettere per li quattro Re* must have been to announce an intention to have all four Kings among the cards won in tricks.

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The interpretations of all these phrases are not certain, although we are helped to arrive at them by the game still played in Mineo. But they allow us to form a very good idea of how the game of Tarocchi was played in Villabianca's time. In the section of his *Opuscolo* on Gallerini, the Sicilian form of Minchiate, Villabianca says that in it there are also the *scommesse* of *Vanti*, *Rivanti* and *Arcirivanti* as in Tarocchi; presumably the term "*scommesse*" is here being used to mean any announcement to undertake some feat in play. Among these, he adds vaguely, are those called *Virzicoli*. We may thus conclude that the Sicilian game of Gallerini retained the scores for *versicoli*, special combinations of cards, characteristic of the prototypical Florentine game, but that it differed from it by

adding various announcements of intention to achieve particular feats, at least ones relating to the last trick. Gallerini had died out in Sicily by the end of the XVIII century, or soon after. What was presumably the same game continued to be played in Genoa until the 1930s under the name of Gallerini; it is now too late to discover the exact rules.