

THE GAME OF TAROTS

by

Antoine Court de Gébelin

translated from the French by Donald Tyson



(Antoine Court de Gébelin: 1728-84)

The following two essays appear in Volume 8, Book 1, pages 365-410 of the work *Monde Primitif, analysé et comparé avec le monde moderne* (The Primitive World, analyzed and compared with the modern world). The nine volumes of this unfinished work were published in Paris over the period 1773-82. The eighth volume appeared in 1781.

The first essay, titled *Du Jeu des Tarots*, was written by Court de Gébelin himself; the author of the second, titled *Recherches sur les Tarots, et sur la Divination par les Cartes des Tarots, par M. Le C. de M.* (Study on the Tarots, and on Divination with Tarot cards, by M. the C. of M.), has been identified as Louis Raphaël Lucrèce de Fayolle, the Comte de Mellet (1727-1804).

It appears that Court de Gébelin had the essay by the Comte de Mellet in his possession when he wrote his own work on the Tarot, and was influenced by its contents. De Mellet probably composed his work independently, prior to reading Court de Gébelin's essay, although he was aware of some of Court de Gébelin's ideas about the Tarot.

Court de Gébelin's essay is noteworthy for establishing the Tarot as a repository of esoteric wisdom, for placing its origins in ancient Egypt, for linking the dissemination of the Tarot throughout Europe with the Gypsies, for alluding to the connection between the 22 trumps and 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and for placing the Fool firmly at the head of the trumps, rather than at their end, its previous traditional location. His views exerted a profound

influence on later writers on the Tarot, even though most of his assertions are incorrect. The Tarot was probably not deliberately designed as a book of esoteric wisdom; it did not originate in Egypt; it has no ancient connection with the Gypsies; the similarity in number between the trumps and the Hebrew letters may be accidental; there is no hard evidence supporting the location of the Fool at the head of the trumps.

The Comte de Mellet's essay is significant for his inverted ordering of the trumps that begins with the World and ends with the Fool, for his explicit linking of the individual trumps with individual Hebrew letters, for his exposition of the method of Tarot divination in use in his day, and for his presentation of the esoteric names and meanings associated with many of the cards.

The present English translation of these seminal treatises in the history of the Tarot arose from my current work on the esoteric evolution of these cards. I needed a full knowledge of the material contained in Court de Gébelin's book, and discovered to my surprise that these essays were not available for free in English on the Internet. Considering the importance of these works, their age, and their relative brevity, this was quite astonishing. As a consequence, I decided to translate them and put them on this Web site so that anyone else who might want to read what Court de Gébelin and the Comte de Mellet had to write about the Tarot would not be similarly disappointed.

These translations are quite rough - I would even go so far as to call them crude. They should not be relied upon where accurate quotations from the essays are needed. My skill in French is limited, and I am sure its limitations are evident in the translations. However, bearing this in mind, most of what these two pioneers of the esoteric Tarot had to communicate on the subject may be gathered from the English version that appears here.

All of the remarks in square brackets, with one possible exception, were apparently made by Court de Gébelin. I have not inserted any editorial comments. Originally in Court de Gébelin's essay the trump Temperance was incorrectly numbered XIII, but a note repairs this mistake - it is not clear from the French HTML copy of the work that I used as my source whether this correction was made in the original book. In the future I may find time to provide a set of notes explaining some of the errors and obscurities in the text.

The drawings of the trumps that accompany the text were executed at Court de Gébelin's instruction by the artist Mademoiselle Linote. Many of them were inverted left to right in the process of printing - I have presented them as they appear in *Monde primitif*, without correcting these inversions. In Court de Gébelin's book the drawings were gathered together in several plates, but here they are inserted individually next to the passages describing them.

Donald Tyson

THE GAME OF TAROTS

*Where one deals with the origin, where one explains the allegories,
and where one shows that it is the source of our modern playing cards, etc etc.*

1.

The surprise caused by the discovery of an Egyptian book.

If one proceeded to announce that there is still nowadays a work of the former Egyptians, one of their books that escaped the flames that devoured their superb libraries, and which contains

their purest doctrines on interesting subjects, everyone who heard, undoubtedly, would hasten to study such an invaluable book, such a marvel. If one also said that this book is very widespread in most of Europe, that for a number of centuries it has been in the hands of everyone, the surprise would be certain to increase. Would it not reach its height, if one gave assurances that no one ever suspected that it was Egyptian; that those who possessed it did not value it, that nobody ever sought to decipher a sheet of it; that the fruit of an exquisite wisdom is regarded as a cluster of extravagant figures which do not mean anything by themselves? Would it not be thought that the speaker wanted to amuse himself, and played on the credulity of his listeners?

2.

This Egyptian book exists.

This fact is certainly very true: this Egyptian book, the only survivor of their superb libraries, exists in our day: it is even so common, that no sage condescends to occupy himself with it; nobody before us has ever suspected its famous origin. This book is composed of 77 layers or tables, even of 78, divided into five classes, each of which offer subjects as varied as they are amusing and instructive. This book is in a word the game of Tarots, the playing of which is admittedly unknown in Paris, but very well known in Italy, in Germany, even in Provence, and also by the bizarre figures which each one of its cards offers, as well as by their multitude.

Event though the regions where it is in use are so extensive, none is more advanced than the others in understanding the value of the strange figures than it presents: and such is the antiquity of its origins, buried in the darkness of time, that no one knows either where or when it was invented, nor the reason why it is made up of so many extraordinary figures, of which so little is known that they offer collectively a single enigma that nobody has ever sought to solve.

This game even appeared so unworthy of attention, that it never came under the consideration of the eyes of those of our savants who dealt with the origins of cards: they only spoke of French cards, which are in use in Paris, whose origin is not very old; and after having proven the modern invention of them, they believed they had exhausted the matter. It is in this way indeed that one constantly confuses the establishment in a country of a certain practice with its primitive invention: it is what we already showed with regard to the compass: the Greeks and the Romans themselves confused only too thoroughly these objects, which deprived us of a multitude of interesting origins.

But the form, the disposition, the arrangement of this game, and the figures which it presents, are so obviously allegorical, and these allegories are so in conformity with the civil, philosophical and religious doctrines of the ancient Egyptians, that one cannot avoid recognizing the work of these sagacious people: they only could be its inventors, who rivaled in this respect the Indians who created the game of chess.

Division.

We will show the allegories which the various cards of this game offer.
The numerical formulas according to which it was made up.
How it was transmitted down to us.
Its relationship with a Chinese monument.
How the Spanish cards were born from it.
And correspondences of these last with the French cards.

This exercise will be followed by an essay where it is established how this game may be applied to the art of the divination; it is the work of a General Officer, the Governor of a province, who honors us with his benevolence, and who found in this game with a very clever sagacity the Egyptian principles on the art of prognosticating by cards, principles which distinguished the earliest bands of Egyptians, incorrectly named Bohemians, who spread themselves throughout Europe; and there still remain some vestiges in our card decks, which lend themselves to divination infinitely less by their monotony and small number of their figures.

The Egyptian game, on the contrary, is suited admirably for this effect, encompassing in a way the whole universe, and all the various conditions of the life of man. Such was the wisdom of this singular people, that they imprinted on the least of their works the seal of immortality, so that others to some extent seem hardly able to walk in their footsteps.

ARTICLE I

Allegories presented by the cards of the game of Tarots.

If this game which always remained obscure to all those which knew of it, stood revealed to our eyes, it was not the effect of some deep meditation, nor of the desire to clear up its chaos: we did not spend an instant thinking about it. Invited as a guest a few years ago to meet with a lady of our acquaintance, Madam la C. d'H., who had arrived from Germany or Switzerland, we found her occupied playing this game with some other people. We played a game which you surely do not know ... That may be; which is it?.. the game of Tarots ... I had occasion to see it when I was extremely young, but I did not have any knowledge of it ... it is a rhapsody of the most bizarre figures, the most extravagant: and here is one, for example; one has care to choose a card filled with figures, bearing no relationship to its name, it is the World: I there cast my eyes, and at once I recognize the allegory: everyone leaves off their game and comes to see this marvelous card in which I apprehend what they have never perceived: each one asks me to expound another of the cards: in one quarter of an hour the cards were comprehended, explained, declared Egyptian: and since it was not the play of our imaginations, but the effect of the deliberate and significant connections of this game with all that is known of Egyptian ideas, we promised ourselves to share the knowledge some day with the public; persuaded that it would take pleasure in the discovery of a gift of this nature, an Egyptian book that had escaped barbarity, the devastations of time, fires accidental and deliberate, and the even greater disaster of ignorance.

A necessary consequence of the frivolous and light form of this book, which made it capable of triumphing over all the ages and of passing down to us with a rare fidelity: the ignorance which until now even we have been in concerning what it represented, was a happy safe conduct that allowed it to cross every century quietly without anyone thinking of doing it harm.

It is time to recover the allegories that it had been intended to preserve, and to show that to the wisest of all peoples, everything including games was founded on allegory, and that these wise savants converted into a recreation the most useful knowledge, and made of it just a game.

We said it, the game of Tarots is composed of 77 cards, even of a 78th, divided into atouts and four suits. So that our readers can follow us, we made engravings of the atouts; and the Ace of each suit, which we call after the Spaniards, *Spadille*, *Baste*, and *Ponte*.

ATOOTS

The atouts number 22, and in general represent the temporal and spiritual leaders of society, the physical leaders of agriculture, the cardinal virtues, marriage, death and resurrection or creation; the various plays of fortune, the sage and the fool, time which consumes all, etc. One understands thus in advance that all these cards are as many allegorical pictures relating to the whole of life, and susceptible to an infinitude of combinations. We will examine them one by one, and will try to decipher the particular allegory or enigma that each one of them contains.



Number 0, Zero
The Fool.

One cannot fail to recognize the Fool in this card, with his crazed look, and his apparel furnished with shells and bells: he goes very quickly, as mad as he is, bearing behind him his small pack, and thinking to escape thereby from a tiger which bites him on the haunch: as for the pack, it is the emblem of his faults that he wishes not to see; and this tiger, those of his regrets which follow it eagerly, and which jump in to bite behind him.

This beautiful idea that Horace framed so well in golden words, would thus never have been invented by him, had it not escaped destruction with the Egyptians: it would have been a vulgar idea, a commonplace; but captured in the eternal truth of Nature, and presented with all the graces of which he was capable, this pleasant and wise poet seemed to have drawn it from his own deep judgement.

As for this atout, we number it zero, though it is placed it in the order of cards after the twenty-first, because it does not count when it is alone, and possesses only the value that it gives to the others, precisely like our zero: showing thus that nothing exists without its folly.



Number I

The Game of Cups, or the Juggler.

We start with number I and proceed to XXI, because the current practice is to start with the least number and continue on to the highest: it was however that of the Egyptians to began to count with the higher, continuing down to the lower. Thus they sang the octave while going down, and not while going up like us. In the essay which follows this one, the writer follows the practice of the Egyptians, and makes the best account of it. There are thus here two approaches: ours more convenient when one wants to consider these cards only in themselves: and that other, useful in better conceiving the whole set and their relationships.

The first of all atouts while counting up, or the last while counting down, is a player at cups; this is evident by his table covered with dice, goblets, knives, balls, etc., by his staff of Jacob or rod of the Magi, by the ball which he holds between two fingers and which he will cause to disappear.

It is called the Juggler in the titles of the cards: this is the vulgar name given to it by people of this condition: is it necessary to say that the name derives from *baste*, stick?

At the head of all the trumps, it indicates that all of life is only a dream that vanishes away: that it is like a perpetual game of chance or the shock of a thousand circumstances which are never dependant on us, and which inevitably exerts a great influence on any general administration.

But between the Fool and Juggler, man is not well.



Numbers II, III, IV, V
Leaders of Society.

Numbers II and III represent two women: numbers IV and V, their husbands: they are the temporal and spiritual leaders of society.

King and Queen.

Number IV represents the King, and III the Queen. They have both for symbols the eagle on a shield, and a scepter surmounted by a sphere crowned with a cross, called a Tau, the sign of excellence.



The King is seen in profile, the Queen facing. They are both seated on thrones. The Queen wears a long dress, the back of her throne is high: the King is in a chair shaped like a gondola or shell, his legs crossed. His semicircular crown is surmounted by a pearl with a cross. That of the Queen terminates in a peak. The King carries an order of knighthood.

High Priest and High Priestess.

Number V represents the leader of the hierophants or the High Priest: Number II the High Priestess or his wife: it is known that among Egyptians, the leaders of the priesthood were married. If these cards were of modern invention, one would not see one titled the High Priestess, much less still bearing the name of Papesse, as the German card makers ridiculously titled this one.



The High Priestess sits in an armchair: she wears a long dress with a type of veil behind her head which descends to cross over her breast: she has a double crown with two horns like that of Isis: she holds a book open on her knees; two scarves furnished with crosses cross on her abdomen and form an X there.



The High Priest wears a long habit with a great coat which serve as his vestments: on his head is the triple crown: one hand holds a scepter with a triple cross, and the other gives the blessing with two fingers extended toward two individuals at his knees.

Italian card makers or Germans who brought back this game to their buyers, made these two characters into what the ancients called the Father and Mother, like our names Abbot and Abbess, Oriental words meaning the same thing; they called them, I say, Pope and Popess.

As for the scepter with the triple cross, it is a symbol absolutely Egyptian: one sees it on the Table of Isis, under Letter TT; an invaluable monument which we have already caused to be engraved in all its details in order to present it some day to the public. It is related to the triple Phallus that may be observed in the famous Feast of Pamyliis where one rejoices to have found Osiris, and where it represents the symbol of the regeneration of plants and all of Nature.



Number VII
Osiris Triumphant.

Osiris advances; he comes in the form of a king triumphing, his scepter in hand, his crown on his head: he is in the chariot of a warrior, drawn by two white horses. Nobody is unaware that Osiris was the primary god of the Egyptians, the same one as that of all the Sabaean people, or that he is the physical sun symbol of a supreme invisible divinity, but who appears in this masterpiece of Nature. He was lost during the winter: he reappeared in springtime with a new radiance, having triumphed over all against whom he made war.



Number VI
The Marriage.

A young man and a young woman pledge themselves their mutual faith: a priest blesses them, an expression of love on his features. Card makers call this card, the Lovers. They seem also to have added themselves the figure of Love with his bow and its arrows, to make this card more eloquent in their view.

One sees in the *Antiquities* of Boissard [T. III. Pl. XXXVI.], a monument of the same nature, representing the marital union; but it is made up only of three figures.

The lover and his mistress who give themselves their faith: the figure of Love between the two takes the place of the witness and the priest.

This image is entitled *Fidei Simulacrum*, Tableau of Marital Faith: the characters in it are designated by these beautiful names, Truth, Honor and Love. It is unnecessary to say that truth designates the woman here rather than the man, not only because this word is of female gender, but because constant fidelity is more essential in a woman. This invaluable monument was raised by one named T. Fundanius Eromenus or the Pleasant One, with his very dear wife Poppée Demetrie, and with their cherished daughter Manilia Eromenis.

Plate V

Numbers VIII, XI, XII, XIII
Four Cardinal Virtues.

The Figures which we have joined together in this plate, relate to the four cardinal virtues.



Number XI. This one represents Fortitude. It is a woman who is the mistress of a lion, and who opens its mouth with the same facility as she would open that of her small spaniel; she has on her head the cap of a shepherdess.



Number XIII. Temperance [recte: XIV]. This shows a woman who pours the water of one vase into another, to temper the liquor which it contains.



Number VIII. Justice. It is a queen, it is Astraea sitting on her throne, holding with one hand a dagger; with the other, a balance.



Number XII. Prudence is numbered among the four cardinal virtues: could the Egyptians forget it in this painting of human life? However, one does not find it in this game. One sees in its place under number XII, between Fortitude and Temperance, a man hanging by the feet: but why is he hung like this? It is the work of a bad and presumptuous card maker who, not understanding the beauty of the allegory contained upon this card, took on himself to correct it, and thereby has entirely disfigured it.

Prudence can only be represented in a way sensible to the eyes by a man upright, who having one foot set, advances the other, and holds it suspended while looking for the place where he will be able to safely place it. The title of this card was thus the Man with A Raised Foot, or the Suspended Foot: the card maker, not knowing what this signified, made of it a man hung by the feet.

Then one asked, why a hanged man in this game? and another did not fail to say, it is a fit punishment for the inventor of the game, to have represented a female pope.

But placed between Fortitude, Temperance and the Justice, who does not see that it is Prudence that is lacking and that must have been originally represented?



Plate VI

Numbers IX

The Sage, or the Seeker of Truth and Justice.

Number IX represents a worthy philosopher in a long coat, a hood on his shoulders: he goes bent on his stick, bearing a lantern in his left hand. It is the Sage who seeks justice and virtue.

One thus imagines, based on this Egyptian painting, the story of Diogenes who with lantern in hand seeks a man in full midday. The witty remarks, know-all epigrams, are of any century: and Diogenes was the man who enacted this scene.

Card makers made of this a wise hermit. It is rather well conceived: philosophers live in voluntary retirement from those who are not cleansed from the frivolity of the times. Heraclitus passed for insane in the eyes of his dear Concitoyens: in the East, moreover, to deliver oneself to speculative or hermetic sciences, is almost the only option. The Egyptian hermits cannot approach in this respect those of the Indians, and in temples of Siam: they all were or are like as many Druids.

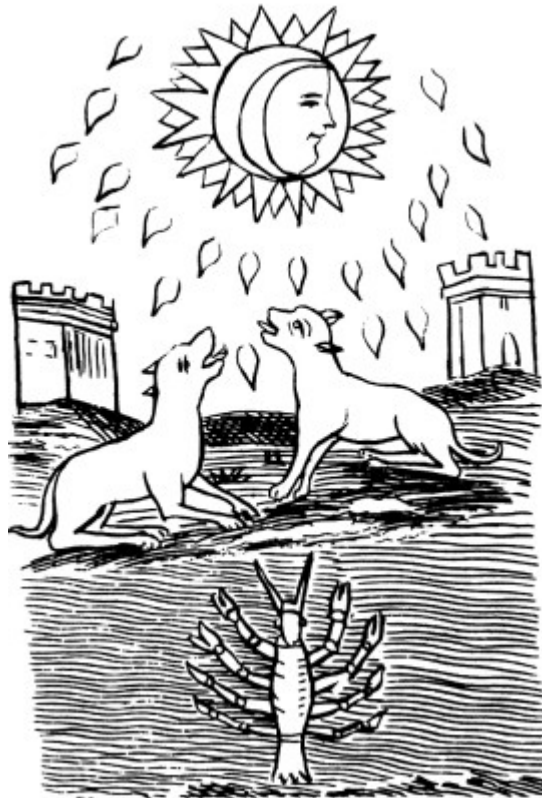


Number XIX
Sun.

We joined together under this plate all the cards relating to the light: thus after the cloaked lantern of the Hermit, we will review the Sun, the Moon and brilliant Sirius or glittering Dog Star, all figures in this game, with various symbols.

The Sun is represented here like the physical father of man and of Nature entire: it illuminates men in society, it regulates their cities: of its rays are distilled gold tears and pearls: thus one marks out the happy influences of this star.

The game of Tarots is perfectly in conformity here with the doctrines of the Egyptians, as we shall examine in more detail in the following article.



Number XVIII
The Moon.

Thus the Moon which goes following the Sun is also accompanied by tears of gold and pearls, to also mark what it contributes in its part to the advantages of the ground.

Pausanias teaches us in his description of Phocide, that according to the Egyptians, it was the tears of Isis which flooded each year the waters of the Nile and which thus rendered fertile the fields of Egypt. The historians of that country also speak about a drop or tear, which falls from the Moon at the time when the water of the Nile must grow bigger.

At the bottom of this card, one sees a crayfish or Cancer, either to mark the retrograde functioning of the Moon, or to indicate that it is at the time when the Sun and the Moon leave the sign of Cancer at which the flood caused by their tears arrives, at the rising of the Dog Star that one sees in the following card.

It may even be that the two reasons are joined together: is it not very common to be persuaded by a crowd of consequences which form a mass one feels too embarrassed to disentangle?

The middle of the card is occupied by two towers, one on each side to indicate the two famous Pillars of Hercules, beyond which these two large luminaries never pass.

Between the two columns are two dogs which seem to bark against the Moon and to guard it: perfectly Egyptian ideas. These people, unique for their allegories, compared the Tropics with two palaces, each one guarded by a dog, which, similar to faithful gatekeepers, held back these stars in the middle region of the skies without allowing them to slip towards one or the other Pole.

These are not fantasies of commentators on customs. Clement, himself Egyptian, since he was of Alexandria, and who consequently knew what he was talking about, assures us in his *Tapestries* [or *Stromates*, Liv. V.] that the Egyptians represented the Tropics under the figure of two dogs, which, similar to gatekeepers or faithful guards, kept the Sun and the Moon from going to the Poles.



Number XVII
The Dog Star.

Here we have under our gaze a card not allegorical, and absolutely Egyptian; it is entitled the Star. One may see there, indeed, a brilliant star, about which are seven different smaller stars. The bottom of the card is occupied by a washer woman on a knee which holds two vases, from which run two streams. Near this woman is a butterfly on a flower.

It is purely Egyptian.

This Star, preeminently, is the Dog Star or Sirius: a star which rises when the Sun leaves the sign of Cancer, in which ends the preceding card, and which this Star immediately follows.

The seven stars that are around it, and seem like courtiers, are the planets: it is to some extent their queen, since it fixes in this moment the beginning of the year; they seem to come to receive its commands in order to regulate their courses on it.

The lady which is below, and extremely attentive at this moment to spread the water of her vases, is the Queen of Heaven, Isis, to the benevolence of whom were attributed the floods of the Nile, which start with the rising of the Dog Star; thus this rising was the signal of the inundation. The reason the Dog Star was consecrated to Isis, is that it was her perfect symbol.

And as the year began simultaneously with the rising of this star, one of its names is Soth-Is, opening of the year; and it is under this name that it was devoted to Isis.

Lastly, the flower and the butterfly which it supports, represent the symbols of regeneration and resurrection: they signify at the same time the blessing of the benefits of Isis, and the rising of the Dog Star, when the lands of Egypt, which were absolutely naked, cover themselves with new crops.

Plate VIII



Number XIII
Death.

Number XIII represents Death: it mows down humans, the kings and the queens, the great ones and the small ones; nothing can resist its murderous scythe.

It is not astonishing that it is placed under this number; the number thirteen was always looked upon as unhappy. It is likely that long ago some great misfortune arrived on a similar day, and that it influenced the memories of all the ancient nations. Can it have been by a continuation of this memory that the thirteen Hebrew tribes were never counted other than as twelve?

Let us add that it is not astonishing either that the Egyptians chose to insert Death into a game, which serves to awaken that pleasant idea: this game was a game of war, the dead thus must enter there: thus it is a game of failures finished by a stalemate, or better put, by a checkmate, the death of the king. Besides, we had occasion to recall in the calendar, that in the feasts, this wise and considered people introduced there a skeleton under the name of Mâneros,

undoubtedly in order to urge the guests not to commit suicide by greediness. Each one has his manner of seeing, and tastes never should be disputed.



Number XV
Typhon.

Number XV represents a famous Egyptian character, Typhon, brother of Osiris and Isis, the bad principle, the great demon of hell: he has the wings of a bat, the feet and hands of harpy; on his head, the villainous horns of a stag: he is also ugly, as devilish as one could be. At his feet are two small imps with long ears, with large tails, their lowered hands behind their backs: they themselves are bound by a cord which passes to their necks, and which is attached to the pedestal of Typhon: he never releases those that are with him; he likes those that are his own.



Number XVI

The House of God, or Castle of Plutus.

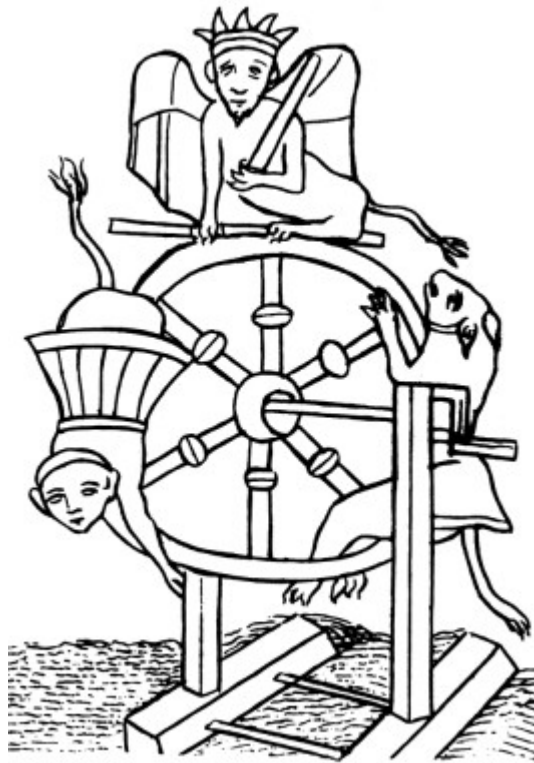
Here, we have a lesson against avarice. This card represents a tower, which one calls the House of God, that is, the highest house; it is a tower filled with gold, it is the castle of Plutus: it collapses in ruins, and its adorers fall crushed under its remains.

With this card, one can understand the history of this Egyptian prince about which Herodotus speaks, and which he calls Rhampsinitus, who, having made a large tower of stone to contain his treasures, and of which he only had the key, noticed however that they were diminishing under his very gaze, without anyone passing in any manner through the only door which existed in this building. To discover such skilful robbers, this prince proceeded to set traps around the vases which held his riches. The robbers were two sons of the architect who served Rhampsinitus: he had rigged a stone in such a manner, that it was possible to remove it and enter to steal at will without fear of capture. He taught its secret to his children who made use of it marvelously as one sees. They robbed the prince, and then they left the tower at the bottom: thus they are represented here. It is in truth the most beautiful part of the *History*; one will find in Herodotus the remainder of this clever tale: how one of the two brothers was taken in the nets: how he urged his brother to cut his head off: how their mother demanded that her son bring back the body of his brother: how he went with goatskin bottles loaded on an ass to steal the corpse from the guards at the palace: how, after they had taken his goatskin bottles in spite of his cunning tears, and had fallen asleep, he shaved off from all of them the right side of their beards, and he removed the body of his brother: how the king extremely astonished, urged his daughter to compel each of her lovers to reveal to her the cleverest trick which they had ever done: how this devious youth went near the beautiful one, told her all that he had done: how the beautiful one having wanted to detain him, had seized only one false arm: how, to complete this great adventure, and to lead it to a happy end, this king promised in marriage

this same daughter to the clever young man who had played him so well, as the person worthiest of her; which was carried out to the great satisfaction of all.

I do not know if Herodotus took this tale for a real history; but people able to invent similar romances or Milesian Fables, could very easily invent any game.

This tale brings back another fact which proves what we said in the history of the calendar, that statues of giants that appear in various festivals, almost always designate the seasons. It says that Rhampsinitus, the same prince of which we came to speak, caused to be raised in the north and the south of the temple of Vulcan two statues of twenty-five cubits, one titled Summer and the other Winter: they adored the one, and sacrificed, on the contrary, to the other: it is thus like the savages who recognize the good principle and admire it, but who sacrifice only to the bad.



Number X
The Wheel of Fortune.

The last number of this plate is the Wheel of Fortune. Here human caricatures, in the form of monkeys, of dogs, of rabbits, etc. rise turn-with-turn on this wheel to which they are attached: it is said that it is a satire against fortune, and those which it elevates quickly, it lets fall down with the same speed.

Plate VIII



Number XX

Card badly named the Last Judgement.

This card represents an angel sounding a trumpet: one sees immediately rising from the ground an old man, a woman, a naked child. Card makers who forgot the significance of these cards, and more still their numbers, saw here the Last Judgement; and to make it more obvious, they put into it something resembling tombs. Removing these tombs, this card is also used to indicate the creation, arrived in time, at the beginning of time, which number XXI indicates.



Number XXI

Time, badly named the World.

This card, which card makers called the World, because they regarded it as the origin of all, represents Time. One cannot be mistaken with this number. In the center is the goddess of Time, with her veil which flies, and which serves her as a belt or *peplum*, as the ancients called it. She is in a posture to run like time, and in a circle which represents the revolutions of time; as well as the egg where all exists in time. At the four corners of the card are the symbols of the four seasons, which form the revolutions of the year, the same which make up the four heads of the Kerubim.

These emblems are, The Eagle, the Lion, the Ox, and the Young Man:

The Eagle represents spring, when the birds return.

The Lion, the summer or burning of the Sun.

The Ox, the autumn when one plows and when one sows.

The Young Man, the winter, when one meets in company.

ARTICLE II

Suits.

In addition to the atouts, this game is composed of four suits distinguished by their symbols: they are called Sword, Cup, Baton and Coin. One can see the Aces of these four suits in Plate VIII.

A represents the Ace of Swords, surmounted by a crown which surrounds the palms.

C, the Ace of Cups: it has the appearance of a castle; it is how one made in former times large money cups.

D, the Ace of Batons; it is truly a bludgeon.

B, the Ace of Coins, surrounded by garlands.

Each one of these suits is made up of fourteen cards, that is, of ten cards numbered I to X, and of four illustrated cards, which one calls the King, the Queen, the Knight or Horseman, and his Page or Servant. These four suits relate to the four classes between which the Egyptians were divided. The Sword designates the sovereign and the military or nobility. The Cup, the clergy or priesthood. The Baton, or bludgeon of Hercules, agriculture. The Coin, trade of which money is the sign.

This game is based on the number seven.

This game is absolutely founded on the sacred number of seven. Each suit is of twice seven cards. Atouts are three time seven; the total number of the cards is seventy-seven; the Fool being like 0. However, nobody is unaware of the role that this number played among the Egyptians, and that it became in their nation a formula with which they reconciled the elements of all sciences.

The sinister idea attached in this game to the number thirteen, recollects also extremely well this same beginning.

This game can thus have been invented only by the Egyptians, that has as a base the number seven; that is related to the division of the inhabitants of Egypt into four classes; that has the

majority of its atouts related absolutely to Egypt, such as the two heads of hierophants, man and woman, Isis or the Dog Star, Typhon, Osiris, the House of God, the World, the dogs which indicate the Tropics, etc; that this game, entirely allegorical, could only be the work of the Egyptians.

Invented by a man of genius, before or after the game of chess, and joining together utility with delight, it has passed down to us through all the centuries; it has endured the utter ruin of Egypt and of the wise men which distinguished that nation; and while one may have no idea of the wisdom of the lessons only they could teach, one nevertheless enjoys playing with what they have invented.

It is easy besides to trace the road which it followed to arrive in our regions. In the first centuries of the Church, the Egyptians were very widespread in Rome; they carried there their ceremonies and the worship of Isis; consequently the game in question.

This game, interesting by itself, was limited to Italy until relations between the Germans with the Italians made it known to this second nation; and until the counts from Italy living in Provence, during the stay in Avignon of all the Court from Rome, naturalized it in Provence and in Avignon.

That it did not come to Paris, should be attributed to the strangeness of its figures and the number of its cards, which were not likely to appeal to the vivacity of the ladies of France. Also one was obliged, as it will soon be seen, to excessively reduce this game in their favor.

However that same Egypt does not enjoy the fruit of its invention: reduced to the most deplorable servitude, and the most profound ignorance, deprived of all arts, its inhabitants are scarcely in a position to manufacture a card game.

If our French cards, infinitely less complicated, require the constant work of a multitude of hands and the mingling of several arts, how were these unfortunate people to preserve their own? Such are the evils which befall a subjugated nation, even to the loss of the objects of its amusements: not having been able to preserve its most invaluable advantages, of which right pretends it to what was only a pleasant recreation?

Eastern names preserved in this game.

This game preserved some names which also would declare it to be an Oriental game if one had no other evidence.

These names are those of Taro, Mat and Pagad.

1. Tarots.

The name of this game is pure Egyptian: it is composed of the word *Tar*, which means way, path; and of the word *Ro, Ros, Rog*, which means king, royal. It is, literally, the Royal Path of Life.

It indeed refers to the entire life of citizens, since it is formed of the various classes between which they are divided, and follows them from their birth to death, showing all the virtues and all physical and moral guides to which they must abide, such as the king, the queen, heads of religion, the Sun, the Moon, etc.

It teaches them at the same time by the Player at Cups and the Wheel of Fortune, that nothing is more inconstant in this world than various states of man: that his only refuge is in virtue, which never fails when needed.

2. *Mat.*

The Mat, which is vulgarly named the Fool, and which remains in its Italian form, come from the Eastern word *mat*, struck, bruised, cracked. Fools were always represented as having a cracked brain.

3. *Pagad.*

The Player at Cups is called Pagad in the modern version of the game. This name which resembles nothing in our Western languages, is pure Oriental and very well chosen: *pag* means in the East chief, master, lord: and *gad*, fortune. Indeed, it is represented as showing Fate with its rod of Jacob or its rod of the Magi.

Article III

The way in which one plays Tarots.

1st. *Manner of dealing the cards.*

One of our friends, Mr. A. R., agreed to explain to us the way in which one plays it: it is he who will speak, if we have understood well.

This game is played by two, but one deals the cards as if there were three players: each player thus has only one third of the cards: thus during the combat there is always a third of the troops which rest; one calls this the body in reserve.

For this game is a game of war, and not a peaceful game as it has incorrectly been described: however in all armies there is a body in reserve. Moreover, this reserve makes the game more difficult, since one has much more trouble guessing the cards which his adversary may have.

One deals the cards by five, or by five and five.

Of the 78 cards, there thus remain three at the end of the deal; instead of sharing them between the players and the reserve or discarding them, the dealer keeps them; what gives him the advantage of three cards.

2nd. *The manner of counting points during play.*

The atouts do not have all the same value.

Those numbered 21, 20, 19, 18 and 17 are termed the five large atouts.

Those numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 are called the five small ones.

If there are three of the large or three of the small, five points are counted: ten points, if there are four of them; and fifteen, if there are five of them.

This is also an Egyptian manner of counting: the *dinaire* or denier of Pythagoras being equal to the quaternary, since one, two, three and four added together make ten.

If there are ten atouts in this game, they are spread out, and they are worth ten more points; if there are thirteen of them, one also spreads them out, and they are worth fifteen points, independently of the other combinations.

Seven cards bear the name of Tarots especially: they are the privileged cards; and here again, the number seven. These cards are:

The World or atout 21.
The Fool or Madman 0.
The Juggler or atout 1.
(*Atouts-Tarots*)

And the four Kings.

If there are two of these atouts-Tarots, one asks the other whether or not he has it. If the other cannot answer by showing the third, he who asked the question marks 5 points: the other marks 15 of them if he has all three of them. Sequences or the four court figures of the same suit are worth 5 points.

3rd. *Manner of playing the Cards.*

The Fool takes anything, but nothing takes it: it forms an atout, and it is of any suit also.

If one plays a King, but does not have the Queen, one plays the Fool, which is called the Excuse.

The Fool with two Kings, counts 5 points: with three, 15.

A King cut, or killed, 5 points for that which delivers the blow.

If one takes the Juggler from his adversary, one marks 5 points.

Thus the game is to take from one's adversary the figures which count the most points, and to make all efforts to form sequences: the adversary must do all he can to save his great figures: in consequence of seeing it coming, by sacrificing petty atouts, or petty cards of his suits.

He must always be willing to sacrifice, in order to save his strong cards while cutting those of his adversary.

4th. *Variation for the one who deals.*

The one who deals can draw aside neither atouts nor Kings; it is too beautiful a game, since it is savage without danger. All that is permitted him in favor of his primacy, it is to draw aside a sequence: because it counts, and it forces the other to give it up, it is a double advantage.

5th. *Manner of counting the hands.*

The division is into a hundred, as with Piquet, with this difference, that it is not the one who arrives the first at a hundred when the counting is started who gains, but he who then makes the most points; because it is necessary that all counting started continue until the end: it offers thus more resources than Piquet.

To count the points which one has in his hands, each of the seven cards called Tarots, with a card of a suit, is worth 5 points.

A Queen with a card, 4.

A Knight with a Card, 3.

A Page with a card, 2.

Two simple number cards, 1.

The surplus of the points is counted that one of the adversaries has over the other, and he marks them down: one continues the evening of play until one arrives at hundred.

Article IV

The Game of Tarots regarded as a game of political geography.

Someone showed to us in a catalogue of Italian books, the title of a work where the geography is interlaced with the Tarots: but we could not obtain this book containing it lessons of geography engraved on each card of this game: this is an application of this game to geography: the field of conjecture is without end, and perhaps by multiplying the combinations, we may steal away some of the images from this work. Without us being hindered by what may actually be written there, let us conjecture ourselves how the Egyptians would have been able to apply this game to political geography, such as it was known of in their times, three thousand years ago.

Time or the World, represents the moment when the earth left chaos, where matter took a form, being divided into lands and into seas, and where man was created to become its master, the king of this beautiful property.

The four cardinal virtues correspond to the four coasts of the world, east, west, north and south, these four points relating to man, by whom he is in the center of all; that one can call his right, his left, his front and his back, and from where his awareness extends in rays until the end of all, according to the extent of his physical eyes firstly, and then of his intellectual eyes by a different perception.

The four suits will be the four areas or parts of the world corresponding to the four cardinal points, Asia, Africa, Europe and Celto-Scythia or the frozen countries of North: a division which was increased by America since its discovery, when the polar grounds of the North and the South were substituted for the ancient region of Celto-Scythia.

The Sword represents Asia, nations of great monarchies, great conquests, great revolutions.

The Baton, Egypt, nourisher of humanity, and symbol of the South, the black peoples.

The Cup, the North, from which humanity descended, and from which came teaching and science.

The Coin, Europe or the West, rich in gold mines in the beginnings of the world that we so badly term the olden times or ancient times.

Each ten numbered cards of these four suits, will be one of the great regions of these four areas of the world.

The ten cards of Swords will represent: Arabia; Idumée, which rules over the seas of the South; Palestine populated by Egyptians; Phoenicia, mistress of the Mediterranean; Syria or Aramée; Mesopotamia or Chaldea, Média, Susiane, Persia and the Indies.

The ten numbered cards of Batons will represent the three great divisions of Egypt, Thébaïde or Upper Egypt, the Delta or Lower Egypt, Heptanome or Middle Egypt divided into seven governments. Then Ethiopia, Cyrénaïque, or in its place the land of Jupiter Ammon, Lybia or Carthage, the peaceful Telamones, the vagrant Numides, Maures pressed on the Atlantic Ocean; Gétules, which is placed in the south by the atlas, and spreads over those vast regions which we call today Nigeria and Guinea.

The ten cards of Coins will represent the Isle of Crete, monarchy of the famous Minos, Greece and its Isles, Italy, Sicily and its volcanoes, the Balearic Islands famous for the dress of their troops of the line, Bétique rich in herds, Celtibérie abundant in gold mines: Gadix or Cadix, Isle most closely associated with Hercules, most commercial of the universe; Lusitanie and the Fortunate Isles, or the Canaries.

The ten cards of Cups, Armenia and its Mount Ararat, Iberia, Scythes of Imaüs, Scythes of the Caucasus, Cimmerians of Palus-Méotides, Getes or Goths, the Daces, Hyperboreans so celebrated in high antiquity, the Celts wandering in their frozen forests, the Isle de Thulé at the ends of the world.

The four illustrated cards of each suit will stand for certain geographical details relative to each area.

The Kings, the state of the governments of each one, forces of the empires which compose them, and how they are more or less considerable according to whether agriculture is of use and in honor; this source of inexhaustible riches always reappearing.

The Queens, the development of their religions, their manners, their customs, especially of their opinions, opinion having always been regarded as Queen of the World. Happy he who is able to direct it; he will always be king of the universe, master of the same; he is an eloquent Hercules who leads men with a golden bridle.

The Knights, the exploits of the people, the history of their heroes or warriors; of their tournaments, of their games, their battles.

The Pages, the history of arts, their origin, their nature; all that looks at the industrious portion of each nation, that which produces machines, manufacturers, commerce which varies in one hundred ways the form of wealth without adding anything to the base, which causes to circulate in the universe these riches and the products of industry; which puts them at the use of farmers to create new riches while providing an efficient outlet for those to which they have already given birth, and how all are strangled as soon as this circulation does not play freely, since the goods are hoarded, and those who provide them discouraged.

The whole of the 21 or 22 atouts, the 22 letters of the Egyptian alphabet common to the Hebrews and to the East, and which were also used as numbers, are necessary to keep an account of so many regions.

Each one of these atouts will have had at the same time a particular use. Several will have related to the principal objects of celestial geography, if one can use such an expression. Hence:

The Sun, the Moon, Cancer, the Pillars of Hercules, the Tropics or their Dogs.

The Dog Star, this beautiful and brilliant portal of the heavens.

The Celestial Bear, on which all the stars lean by carrying out their revolutions around it, admirable constellation represented by the seven Tarots, and which seems to publish in characters of fire imprinted on our heads and in the firmament, that our solar system was founded like our sciences on the formula of seven, as was even the entire structure of the universe.

All the others can be considered relative to the political and moral geography, the true government of the states: and even with the government of each man in particular. The four atouts relating to civil and religious authority, make known the importance for a state of a united government, and of respect for the ancients.

The four cardinal virtues show that the social classes can be supported only by the kindness of government, by the excellence of instruction, by the practice of the virtues in those who control and who are controlled: Prudence to correct abuses, Fortitude to maintain peace and union, Temperance in the means, Justice towards all. How ignorance, pride, greed, stupidity in the one, generates in others a disastrous contempt: from which disorders result which shake even to their foundations the empires where justice is violated, where force is the only means, where one misuses his power, and where one lives without security. Disorders which destroyed so many families whose names had resounded so long a time across all the earth, and who ruled with such an amount of glory on the astonished nations.

These virtues are no less necessary to each individual. Temperance regulates one's duties towards himself, especially towards his own body which he treats too often only like an unhappy slave, martyr of his disordered affections.

Justice which regulates one's duties towards those nearest and the Divinity itself to which he owes all.

Fortitude with which he is supported in the midst of the ruins of the universe, in spite of the vain and foolish efforts of passions which unceasingly besiege him with their impetuous floods.

Lastly, Prudence with which he patiently awaits the success of his plans, equal to any event and similar to a fine player who never risks his game and can benefit from all circumstances.

The triumphing King then becomes the emblem of that man who by means of these virtues was wise towards himself, right towards others, extreme against passions, foresighted enough to pile up resources against the times of adversity.

Time who uses all with an inconceivable speed, Fortune who is played of all; the Juggler who conjures away all, the Fool who is of all, the Miser who loses all; the Devil who is inside all: Death who absorbs all, seven singular numbers who are of all countries, can give place to observations not less significant and not less varied.

Lastly, he who has very much to gain and nothing to lose, the true King triumphing, is the true Sage who lantern in hand is unceasingly careful where he steps, does not adopt any school, knows all that is good to enjoy, and recognizes all that is evil and to be avoided.

Such is sufficient concerning the geographical-political-moral explanation of this antique game: and such must be the end of all mankind, which would be happy, if all its games ended thus!

Article V.

Relationship of this game with a Chinese monument.

Mr. Bertin who returned so great a benefit to literature and the sciences, by the excellent *Memoirs* that he wrote and published concerning China, told us about a unique monument which was sent to him from this vast region, and which we assume dates from the first ages of this empire, since the Chinese on it looks like an inscription by Yao relating to the receding waters of the Flood.

It is composed of characters which form large compartments in quarter-length, all equal, and precisely the same size as the cards of the game of Tarots. These compartments are distributed in six perpendicular columns, of which the first five contain fourteen compartments each, while the sixth which is not completely filled contains only seven of them.

This monument is thus composed in this way of seventy-seven figures like the set of Tarots: and it is formed according to the same combination of the number seven, since each column is of fourteen figures, and the one which is not is that with half, containing seven of them.

Without that, one would have been able to arrange these seventy-seven compartments in a manner so as to make unnecessary this sixth column: one would have had only to make each column of thirteen compartments; and the sixth would have had twelve.

This Monument is thus perfectly similar, numerically, with the set of Tarots, if one withholds from them only one card: the four suits filling the first four columns with fourteen cards each: and the atouts that number twenty-one, filling the fifth column, and precisely half of the sixth.

It seems quite strange that so similar a relationship was the result of simple chance: it is thus very apparent that both of these monuments were formed according to the same theory, and on the connection with the sacred number seven; they both seem thus to be only different applications of a single formula, perhaps anterior to the existence of the Chinese and the Egyptians: perhaps one will even find something similar among the Indians or the people of Tibet who are located between these two ancient nations.

We were extremely tempted to also make an engraving of this Chinese monument; but feared it would appear badly when reduced to a size smaller than the original, and also the impossibility, given the means available to us to do all that was required for the perfecting of our work, prevented us.

Let us not omit that the Chinese figures are in white on a jet black background; what makes them very prominent.

Article VI.

Relationship of this game with squares or tournaments.

During a great number of centuries, the nobility mounted on horseback, and divided into colors or factions, exercised between them pretended combats or tournaments perfectly similar to that carried out in the games of cards, and especially in that of the Tarots, which was a military game just as that of chess, up until the time that it came to be considered a civil game, an aspect it has taken on presently.

In the beginning, the knights of the tournaments were divided into four, even into five bands relating to the four suits of the Tarots and with the set of atouts. The last entertainment of this kind which was seen in France, was given in 1662 by Louis XIV, between Tileries and the

Louvre, in that great place where is preserved the name Caroussel. It was composed of five squares. The King was the leader of the Romans: his brother, head of the House of Orleans, with the leader of the Persians: the Prince of Condé commanded the Turks: the Duke of Enguien his son, the Indians: the Duke de Guise, the Americans. Three queens were seated there on a platform: the Queen Mother, the reigning Queen, the widowed Queen of England of Charles II. The Count de Sault, son of the Duke of Lesdiguières, placed the prizes for the matches into the hands of the Queen Mother.

The squares were usually made up of 8 or 12 knights for each color: which, to 4 colors by 8 squares, gives the number 32, which forms that of the cards for the game of Piquet: and to 5 colors, the number 40 which is that of the cards for the game of Quadrille.

Article VII

Spanish card decks.

When one examines the card decks in use among Spaniards, one cannot avoid noticing that they are a diminutive form of the Tarots.

Their most distinctive games are that of Hombre which is played by three: and Quadrille which is played by four and which is only a modification of the game of Hombre.

This name signifies the game of man, or human life; it thus has a name which corresponds perfectly to that name Tarot. It is divided into four suits which bear the same titles as in the Tarots, such as *Spadille* or Swords, *Baste* or Batons, which are the two black suits; *Copa* or Cups, and *Dinero* or Coins, which are both red suits.

Several of these names were carried into France with this game: thus the Ace of Spades is called *Spadille* or Swords; the Ace of Clubs, *Baste*, that is, Batons. The Ace of Hearts is named *Ponte*, from the Spanish *punto*, having a point.

Those atouts, which are the strongest, are called *Matadors*, or the Slaughtermen, the triumphant who destroyed their enemies.

This game is entirely formed on the tournaments; the proof is striking, since the suits collectively are called *Palos* or Pales, the lances, the pikes of the knights.

The cards themselves are called *Naypes*, from the Oriental word *nap*, which means to take, to hold: literally, the Keepers.

There are thus four or five squares of knights who fight in tournaments.

They are forty, called *Naypes* or Keepers.

Four suits called *Palos* or rows of pikes.

The trumps are called *Matadors* or Slaughtermen, those who came in the end to demolish their enemies.

Finally the names of the four suits, that even of the game, show that it was formed entirely on the game of Tarots; that the Spanish cards are only an imitation in miniature of the Egyptian game.

Article VIII

French cards.

According to this information, no one will have difficulty perceiving that the French cards are themselves an imitation of the Spanish cards, and that they are thus the imitation of an imitation, and in consequence a well degenerated institution, far from being an original invention and first, as is incorrectly expressed in remarks our savants, who do not focus on points of comparison, but only seek to discover the causes and relationships of all.

It is usually supposed that the French cards were invented during the reign of Charles VI, in order to amuse this feeble and infirm prince: but what we believe ourselves is right to assert, is that they were not an imitation of the southernmost games.

Perhaps we may even be right to suppose that the French cards are older than Charles VI, since it is attributed in the dictionary of Ducange [With the word *charta*] to St. Bernard of Sienne, contemporary of Charles V, to have condemned to fire, not only masks and the game of dice, but even the triumphal cards, or of the game called Triumph.

One finds in this same Ducange the criminal statutes of a City called Saona, which defend the legality of card games.

It is necessary that these statutes are very old, since in this work one could not indicate the time of it: this city must be that of Savone.

No doubt it happens that these games are much older than St. Bernard of Sienne: why else would he confuse dice and masks with a game lately invented to amuse a great king?

Besides, our French cards present no vision, no ingenuity, no cohesion. If they were invented according to the tournament, why was the Knight removed, while his Page was retained? why allow at the time only thirteen cards instead of fourteen per suit?

The names of the suits have degenerated at this point and offer no consistency. If one can recognize the Swords in the Spades, how did the Batons become the Clubs? how do the Hearts and the Diamonds correspond with Cups and Coins; and what ideas are revealed by these suits?

Whose idea was it to introduce the names given to the four Kings? David, Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, do not correspond either to four famous monarchs of antiquity, nor with those of modern times. They are a monstrous composition.

It is the same for the names of the Queens: they are called Rachael, Judith, Pallas and Argine: it is true that one believed that they were allegorical names relating to the four ways in which a lady attracts to herself the attentions of men: that Rachael indicates beauty, Judith strength, Pallas wisdom, and Argine, where one only sees the anagram Regina, queen, birth.

But what relationships have these names with Charles VI or with France? What are these forced allegories?

It is true that among the names of Pages one finds that of Hire, which may refer to one of the French Generals of Charles VI; but is this solitary correspondence sufficient to scramble all the periods of history?

We were here when one spoke to us about a work of the Abbot Rive, which discusses the same subject: afterwards having sought it in vain at the greater number of our booksellers, M. de S. Paterne lent it to us.

This work is entitled:

Historical and critical notes of two Manuscripts of the Library of the Duke of Valliere, of which one has for its title Le Roman d'Artus, Comte de Bretagne, and the other, Le Romant de Pertenay or de Lusignen, by M. l'Abbe Rive, etc. at Paris, 1779, in 4o. 36 pages.

On page 7, where the author starts to discuss the origin of the French cards; we saw with pleasure that it supports, (1) that these cards are older than Charles VI; (2) that they are an imitation of Spanish cards: now let us give a brief summary of his evidence.

"Cards, he states, date from at least the year 1330; and it is neither in France, nor in Italy, nor in Germany that they appeared for the first time. One sees them in Spain around this year, and it is a long time before one finds the least trace in any other nation.

They were invented there, according to the Castilian Dictionary of 1734, by one named Nicolao Pepin ...

One finds them in Italy towards the end of this same century, under the name of Naibi, in the Chronicle of Giovan Morelli, which is of the year 1393."

From this learned abbot we discover at the same time that the first Spanish work which attests the existence of cards is from approximately the year 1332.

"They are the Statutes of an order of knighthood established around this period in Spain, and founded by Alphonse XI, King de Castille. Those who were admitted swore an oath not to play cards.

One then sees them in France under the reign of Charles V. Little Jean de Saintré was not honored with the favors of Charles V because he played neither with dice nor with cards, and this king proscribed them along with several others games, in his Edict of 1369. One sees them in various provinces of France; one gave to some of the figures on the cards names made to inspire horror. In Provence, one of the Knaves is named the *Tuchim*. The name signifies a race of robbers who, in 1361, caused in this country and that of Venaissin, a devastation so horrible, that the popes were obliged to preach a crusade to exterminate them. Cards were not introduced into the Court of France because under the successor of Charles V one feared even by their introduction, to wound the standard of morality, and consequently a pretext was conceived: it was said to be done to calm the melancholy of Charles VI. Under Charles VII the game of Piquet was invented. This game was the reason that cards spread, from France, into several other parts of Europe."

These details are very interesting; their consequences are still more so. These cards that were condemned in the XIVth century, and proscribed by the orders of knighthood, are necessarily very old: they have been regarded as only shameful remainders of paganism: they thus must have been the cards of the Tarot; their strange figures, their odd names, such as House of God, the Devil, Popess, etc., their high antiquity which is lost in the night of time, their use in fortune telling, etc. all serve to make them look like a diabolic recreation, a work of the blackest magic, of a sorcery condemnable.

However the agony of not gaming! Thus were invented more human games, more purified, free from figures that were only good to frighten: the result, Spanish cards and French cards which were never prohibited like these bad cards that came out of Egypt, but which however lent themselves perfectly to these clever games.

Especially the game of Piquet, where two opponents play, where one draws aside, where one has sequences, where one goes in a hundred: where one counts the cards in hand, and the pickups, and where one finds a number of other correspondences too striking.

Conclusion.

We thus dare to flatter ourselves that our readers will receive with pleasure these various opinions on so common a subject as cards, and that they will find them to perfectly rectify the vague and poorly reconciled ideas that have been available until now on this subject:

That no one can bring forth proof in support of these proposals.

That the cards have existed only since Charles VI.

That the Italians are the last people which adopted them.

That the figures of the game of Tarots are extravagant.

That it is ridiculous to seek the origin of the cards in the various states of civil life.

That this game of cards is patterned on peaceful life, while that of chess is patterned on war.

That the game of chess is older than that of cards.

Thus the absence of truth, in some manner or other, generates a crowd of errors of all kinds, which becomes more or less harmful, according to whether they unite with other truths, contrast with them or oppose them.

Application of this game to divination.

To finish this examination and these considerations on the Egyptian game, we will put under the eyes of the public the essay that we announced above, where it is proven how the Egyptians applied this game to the art of divination, and how this same use was transmitted down to our gaming cards, made in imitation of these former.

One will see there in particular what we already said in this volume, wherein is explained the relationship between the prophetic dreams in ancient times with the hieroglyphic and philosophical science of the sages, who sought to reduce by their science into a set of images the visions which the Divinity permitted them to receive; and that all this science declined over the course of time, but was wisely preserved, because it was reduced to vain and futile practices, which in the not very enlightened centuries that followed have managed to survive as the preoccupation of fools and the superstitious.

This judicious observer will provide us new evidence that the Spanish cards are an imitation of Egypt, since he teaches us that it is only with the game of Piquet that the fates are consulted, and that several names of these cards relate absolutely to Egyptian ideas.

The Three of Coins is called the Lord, or Osiris.

The three of Cups, the Sovereigness, or Isis.

The two of Cups, the Cow, or Apis.

The Nine of Coins, Mercury.

The Ace of Batons, the Snake, symbol of agriculture among Egyptians.

The Ace of Coins, the One-eyed, or Apollo.

This name of One-eyed, given to Apollo or the Sun as having only one eye, is an epithet taken from Nature that provides us a proof, along with several others, that the famous character of the Edda who lost one of his eyes in a famous allegorical fountain, is no other than the Sun, the One-eyed One or the preeminent single Eye.

This essay is so filled besides with matter, and so apt to give healthy ideas on the way in which the sages of Egypt consulted the book of destiny, that we do not doubt it will be well received by the public, until now deprived of similar research, because until now nobody has had the courage to deal with subjects which appeared lost forever in the deep night of time.

STUDY ON THE TAROTS,
and on the Divination by the Cards of the Tarots,
by M. Le C. de M.***

I
The Book of Thoth.

The desire to teach developed in the heart of man as his spirit acquired new knowledge: the need to preserve it, and eagerness to transmit it, made him imagine characters of which Thoth or Mercury was looked upon as the inventor. These characters were not, in the beginning, conventional signs, and did not express, like our current letters, the sound of the words; they were the same true images that make up the pictures on the cards, which presented to the eyes the things about which one wanted to speak.

It is natural that the inventor of these images was the first historian: indeed, Thoth is regarded as having painted the gods [the gods, in the writing and the hieroglyphic expression, are the eternal and the virtues, represented with one body], that is to say, acts of absolute power, or creation, to which he joined precepts or morals. This book was to be named *A-Rosh*; from *A*, doctrines, science; and from *Rosch* [Rosh is the Egyptian name of Mercury and of its festival which is celebrated the first day of the new year], Mercury, which, joined to the article *T*, means pictures of the doctrines of Mercury; but as *Rosh* also means commencement, this word *Ta-Rosh* was particularly devoted to his cosmogony; just as *Ethotia*, the History of Time, was the title of his astronomy; and perhaps that Athotes, which one took for King, son of Thoth, is only the child of his genius, and the History of the kings of Egypt.

This ancient cosmogony, this book of *Ta-Rosh*, except for some minor corruptions, has come down to us in the cards which still bear this name [twenty-two pictures form a book not very bulky; but if, as is quite probable, the first traditions were preserved in poems, a simple image which fixed the attention of the people, by which one illustrated the event, served to help them to retain them, as well as the verse which described them.], that is to say, greed has preserved for an idle amusement, or superstition has preserved from the injury of time, mysterious symbols which serve them, as formerly they served the Magi, to mislead credulity.

The Arabs communicated this book [We still name *Livret aus Lansquenet*, or *Lands-Knecht*, the series of cards that one gives with the deal.] or game to the Spaniards, and the soldiers of Charles V carried it into Germany. It is composed of three higher series, representing the first three ages, of gold, silver and bronze: each series is made up of seven cards [Three times seven, a mystical, famous number for Kabbalists, Pythagoreans, etc.].

But like the Egyptian writing which reads to the left or the right, the twenty-first card, which was not numbered with an Arabic numeral, is nonetheless also the first, and must be read in the same way in order to understand the history; as it is the first in the game of Tarots, and in the species of divination that one performs with these images.

Lastly, there is a twenty-second card without number as without power, but which increases the value of that which it precedes; it is the zero of magic calculations: it is called the Fool.

First Series.

Age of Gold.

The twenty-first, or first card, represents the Universe by the goddess Isis in an oval, or an egg, with the four seasons in the four corners: the Man or the Angel, the Eagle, the Ox, and the Lion.

Twentieth, this one is titled the Judgement: indeed, an angel sounding a trumpet, and the men leaving the ground, had to induce a painter, not very well versed in mythology, to see in this picture only the image of the Resurrection; but the ancients looked upon the men as children of the Earth [The teeth sown by Cadmus, etc.]; Thoth wanted to express the Creation of Man by painting Osiris, a generating god, with the speaking pipe or verb which orders matter, and by tongues of fire which escape from the cloud, the Spirit [Painted even in our sacred histories.] of God reviving this same matter; finally, by men leaving the ground in order to adore and admire the Absolute Power: the posture of these men does not announce culprits who go to appear in front of their Judge.

Nineteenth, the creation of the Sun which brightens the union of man and woman, expressed by a man and a woman who give to each other their hands: this sign became, after that of Gemini, androgynous: *Duo in carne una.*

Eighteenth, the creation of the Moon and the terrestrial animals, expressed by a wolf and a dog, to stand for domestic animals and wild: this emblem is well chosen, in as much as the dog and the wolf are the only beasts which howl at the appearance of this star, as though regretting the loss of the day. This card makes me believe that its picture once announced very great misfortunes to those who chose to consult the Fates, since it depicts the line of the Tropic, that is to say, of the departure and the return of the Sun, which leaves the comforting hope of a beautiful day and of a better fortune. Also, two fortresses which defend a path traced in blood, and a marsh which terminates the image, inevitably suggest difficulties without number that must be surmounted in order to banish so sinister a presage.

Seventeenth, the Creation of Stars and Fishes, represented by stars and Aquarius.

Sixteenth, the House of God overthrown, or the terrestrial Paradise from which man and woman are precipitated by the blazing tail of a comet or star, joined with a fall of hailstones.

Fifteenth, the Devil or Typhon, final card of the first series, come to disturb the innocence of man and to abolish the golden age. His tail, his horns and his long ears announce that he is a degraded being: his raised left arm and folded wing, forming N, symbol of produced beings, makes us think it signifies having been created; but the torch of Prometheus which he holds with his right hand, serves to complete the letter M, which expresses generation: indeed, the history of Typhon naturally persuades us to this explanation; because it shows that, by depriving Osiris of his virility, that Typhon desired to encroach on the rights of the producing Power; also he was the father of evils which were spread on the ground.

The two beings bound at his feet mark degraded and subjected human nature, as well as a new and perverse generation, whose hooked nails express cruelty; they miss only the wings (spiritual or angelic nature), to be very similar to the devil: one of these beings touches with its claw the thigh of Typhon; a symbol which in mythological writing was always that of carnal generation [the birth of Bacchus and of Minerva are the mythological images of two such generations.]: he touches it with his left claw to signify illegitimacy.

Typhon finally is often taken for the Winter, and this picture finishing the golden age announces the bad weather of the seasons, which will torment the man driven out of the Paradise thereafter.

Second Series.

Age of Silver.

Fourteenth, the Angel of Temperance comes to inform man, to make him avoid the death to which he is lately condemned: it is painted pouring water into wine [Perhaps its attitude is marked with the culture of the vine.], to show man the need for diluting this liquor, or for moderating his emotions.

Thirteenth; this number, always unhappy, is devoted to Death, who is represented mowing crowned heads and vulgar heads.

Twelfth, the accidents which afflict human life, represented by a man hanged by the foot; which wants also to say that, to avoid them, it is necessary in this world to go with prudence: *Suspenseo pede.*

Eleventh, the Strength that is assisted by Prudence, and overcomes the lion, which was always the symbol of the ground uncultivated and wild.

Tenth, the Wheel of Fortune, at the top of which is a crowned monkey, teaches us that after the fall of man, it was no longer virtue which gave dignities: the rabbit that goes up and the man who is precipitated, express the injustices of the inconstant goddess: this wheel at the same time is an emblem of the wheel of Pythagoras, a way of drawing lots by numbers: this form of divination is called arithomancy.

Ninth, the Hermit or the Sage, lantern in hand, seeking justice on the earth.

Eighth, Justice.

Third Series.

Age of Iron.

Seventh, the Chariot of War in which is an armored king, armed with a javelin, expresses the dissensions, the murders, the combats of the age of bronze, and announces the crimes of the age of iron.

Sixth, the man depicted wavering between vice and virtue, is not led any more by reason: Love or Desire [concupiscence], with bandaged eyes, ready to release a dart, will make him lean to the right or to the left, whichever way he is guided by chance.

Fifth, Jupiter or the Eternal together with his eagle, lightning in hand, threatens the earth, and will visit it kings with his anger.

Fourth, the king armed with a bludgeon, which ignorance thereafter made an imperial globe [Osiris is often represented with a whip in his hand, with a sphere and a T: all these things united, have produced in the head of a German card maker an imperial globe]: his helmet is furnished behind with saw-like teeth, to make known that nothing serves to appease his insatiability [Or his revenge, if it has irritated Osiris.].

Third, the Queen, bludgeon in hand; her crown has the same ornaments as the helmet of the King.

Second, the pride of power, represented by the peacock, on which Junon pointing to the sky on the right side, and to the earth of the left, announces a terrestrial religion or idolatry.

First, the Juggler holding the rod of the Magi, making miracles and misleading the credulity of the people.

It is followed by a single card representing the Fool who carries his bag or his errors behind him, while a tiger or his regrets, devouring his haunch, delays his march towards crime [This card does not have a row: it completes the sacred alphabet, and answers to the *Tau* which expresses completion, perfection: perhaps it was intended to represent by this image the natural result of the actions of men.].

These twenty-two first cards are not only hieroglyphics, which when placed in their natural order recall the history of the earliest times, but they are also as many letters [the Hebrew alphabet is composed of 22 letters.] which when differently combined, can form as many sentences; also their name (*A-tout*) is only a literal translation of their general employment and property.

II

This game applied to divination.

When the Egyptians had forgotten the first interpretation of these images, and that they had been used as simple letters for their sacred writing, it was natural that such a superstitious people attached occult virtues to the characters, respected for their antiquity [Also the science of numbers and the value of letters was extremely renowned formerly.], and that the priests, who possessed the only knowledge of them, employed them solely for religious matters.

New characters were even invented, and we see in the holy writings that the Magi along with those who were initiated into their Mysteries, used a divination by cup [Cup of Joseph.].

That they worked wonders with their wand [The rod of Moses and of the magicians of Pharaoh.].

That they consulted talismans [The gods of Laban and the teraphim, Urim and Thummim.] or engraved stones.

That they divined future things by swords [They did more: they fixed the fate of battles; and if King Joas had struck the ground seven times, instead of three, it would have destroyed Syria, II Kings, XIII, 19], by arrows, by axes, finally by weapons in general. These four signs were introduced among the religious images when the establishment of kings had brought different social classes into society.

The Sword marked royalty and power of the earth.

The priests made use of vessels for the sacrifices, and the Cup designated sacred.

The Coin, commerce.

The Baton, the Hoe, the Needle represent agriculture.

These four already mysterious characters, once joined together in the sacred pictures, gave hope of greater illuminations; and the fortuitous combination that one obtains by mixing these images forms the sentences that the Magi read or interpreted like statements of Destiny;

which was to them all the easier since what is revealed by a pattern due to chance, naturally produces an obscurity sacred to the style of oracles.

Each social class thus had its symbol which characterized it; and among the different cards bearing this symbol, some were happy, others unhappy, and according to their position, the number of the symbols and their ornaments, they each served to announce happiness or misfortune.

III.

Names of various cards, preserved by the Spaniards.

The names of several of these cards preserved by the Spaniards, we think very appropriate. These names are seven.

The Three of Coins, a mysterious number, called the Lord, the Master, devoted to supreme God, with Great Jove.

Three of Cups, called the Lady, devoted to the Queen of Heaven.

The One-eyed or the Ace of Coins, *Phoebeoe lampadis instar.*, devoted to Apollo.

The Cow or Two of Cups, devoted to Apis or Isis.

The Grand Nine, the Nine of Cups; devoted to Destiny.

The Little Nine of Coins, devoted to Mercury.

The Serpent or the Ace of Batons (Ophion) a famous and sacred symbol among the Egyptians.

IV.

Mythological attributes of several others.

Several other pictures are accompanied by mythological attributes which were intended to impart to them a particular and secret virtue.

Such as the Two of Coins surrounded by the mystical Belt of Isis.

The Four of Coins, devoted to good Fortune, painted in the midst of the card, on the ball of her foot and her veil deployed.

The Queen of Batons devoted to Ceres; this Lady is crowned with spikes, and carries the skin of a lion in the same way as Hercules, the quintessential farmer.

The Page of Cups carrying his hat in his hand, and respectfully bearing a mysterious cup, covered with a veil; he seems by extending his arm, to push away from himself this cup, to teach us that one has to approach sacred things with fear, and not to seek to know those things which are hidden by discretion.

The Ace of Swords devoted to Mars. The sword is decorated with a crown, a palm and a branch of the olive tree with its bays, to signify victory and its fruits: it is not possible to have a happier card in this suit than this one. It is single, because there is only one way of making war well; that is to prevail in order to achieve peace. This sword is supported by a left arm extended from a cloud.

The card of Batons of the Serpent, about which we spoke above, is decorated with flowers and fruits just as is that of the victorious Sword; this mysterious wand is supported by a right arm extending from a cloud, but bright with rays. These two images seem to say that agriculture and the sword are the two arms of empire and the support of society.

The Cups in general announce happiness, and the Coins wealth.

The Batons are devoted to agriculture and prognosticate more or less abundant harvests, the things which are seen in the countryside or which pertain to it.

They stand for a mixture of good and evil: the four court figures have a green wand, similar to the wand of Fortune, but the other cards express, by compensating symbols, an indication neither good or bad: two only, whose wands are the color of blood, seems devoted to misfortune.

All the Swords predict only misfortunes, especially those marked with an odd number, that carry still a bloody sword. The only sign of victory, the crowned sword, is in this suit the one sign of a happy event.

V

Comparison between these attributes and the values that one assigns to the modern cards for divination.

Our fortune tellers, not knowing how to read hieroglyphics, withdrew all the trumps from them and changed the names of Cups, Batons, Coins and Swords, of which they knew neither the etymology, nor the expression; they substituted those of Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs and Spades.

But they retained certain turnings and several expressions the use of which lets us perceive the origin of their divination. According to them,

The Hearts, (Cups), announce happiness.

The Clubs, (Coins), fortune.

Spades, (Swords), misfortune.

Diamonds, (Batons), indifference and the countryside [It is to be noticed that in their symbolic writing system the Egyptians employed squares to express the countryside].

The Nine of Spades is a disastrous card.

That of Hearts, the card of the Sun; it is easy to recognize the Greater Nine, that of the Cups: just as it is the Lesser Nine in the Nine of Clubs, which they also regard as a happy card.

The Aces announce letters, news: indeed who is more capable to bring news than the One-eyed, (Sun) which traverses, sees and lights all the universe?

The Ace of Spades and the Eight of Hearts predict victory; the Ace Crowned prognosticates in the same way, and all the more happily when it is accompanied by the Cups or the fortunate signs.

The Hearts and more particularly the Ten, reveal the news that must arrive at the city. Cup, symbol of the priesthood, seems intended to express Memphis and the stay of the Pontiffs.

The Ace of Hearts and the Queen of Diamonds announce a happy and faithful tenderness. The Ace of Cups expresses a single happiness, that one possesses alone; the Queen of Diamonds

indicates a woman who lives in the countryside, or partly in the countryside: and in which places can one aspire to more truth, of innocence, than in the villages?

The Nine of Clubs and the Queen of Hearts, mark jealousy. However, the Nine of Coins is a fortunate card, a great passion, even happiness; for a lady living in the great world, does not always leave her lover without concern, etc. etc. One finds an infinity of similar things into which it is futile to search, and here already are too many.

VI

Way in which one proceeds to consult the Fates.

Now let us suppose that two men who want to consult the Fates, have, one the twenty-two letter cards, the other the four suits, and that after having shuffled the cards, and each having cut the cards of the other, they start to count together up to the number fourteen, holding the trumps and the lesser cards in their hands face down so that only their backs are visible; then if a suit card turns up in its natural place, that is, which bears the number named, it must be put aside with the number of the accompanying letter card at the same time, which will be placed above: the one who holds the trumps places this same letter there, so that the book of Destiny is always in its entirety, and there is, in no case, an incomplete sentence; then the cards are mixed again and again receive a cut. Finally the cards are run through to the end a third time with the same attentions; and when this operation is completed, it is a question of reading the numbers which express the accompanying letters. Whatever happiness or misfortune is predicted by each one of them, must be combined with what the card announces that corresponds to them, in the same way that their greater or lesser power is determined by the number of this same card, multiplied by that which characterizes the letter. And for this reason the Fool which does not produce anything, is without number; it is, as we have said, the zero of this calculation.

VII

It made up a great portion of ancient wisdom.

But if the sages of Egypt made use of sacred pictures to predict the future, at the same time they spared no indication which could apprise them of future events, with the hope of encouraging their understanding when their search was preceded by dreams which served to help to develop the sentence produced by the images of the fates!

The priests of this ancient people formed in a good hour a learned society, charged to preserve and to extend human knowledge. The priesthood had its leaders, whose names were Jannes and Jambres, that Saint Paul preserved to us in his *Second Epistle to Timothy*, titles which characterize the august functions of the pontiffs. Jannes [Just as Pharaoh means the Sovereign without being the particular name of any prince who controlled Egypt.] means Explicator, and Jambres Permutater, he who makes wonders.

Jannes and Jambres wrote their interpretations, their discoveries, their miracles. The unbroken continuation of these memories [Pope Gelase I put the 491 books of Jannes and Jambres among the number of apocryphal books.] formed a body of science and doctrines, that showed their deep understanding of physics and morals: they observed, under the inspection of their leaders, the course of the stars, the floods of the Nile, the phenomena of meteorology, etc. The kings brought them together sometimes to make use of their consultings. We see that in the time of the Patriarch Joseph they were called by Pharaoh to interpret a dream; and if Joseph alone had glory to discover the sense of it, it none the less proves that one of the functions of the Magi was to explain dreams.

The Egyptians could not avoid falling into the errors of idolatry [Long still after this time the Magi recognized the finger of God in the Miracles of Moses.]; but back in those times God often moved men with an expression of his will, and if someone boldly questioned him on his eternal decrees, it was at least due to a forgivable desire to seek to penetrate them, when the Divinity seemed, not only to approve, but to even cause, by dreams, this curiosity: also their interpretation was a sublime art, a sacred science of which one made a particular study, reserved for the ministers of the altars: and when the officers of Pharaoh, prisoners with Joseph, grieved themselves not to have anybody to explain their dreams, it is not that they did not have companions in their misfortune; but it was that, locked up in prison by the leader of the militia, there remained nobody among the soldiers who could conduct the religious rituals associated with the sacred tables, let alone anyone having the knowledge to interpret them. The answer that the Patriarch spoke explains their thoughts: the interpretation, he said to them, does it not depend on the Lord? Tell me what you saw.

But to return to the functions of the priests, they began by writing in vulgar letters the dream of which they inquired, as in road divination where they make a positive request of which they proceed to seek the answer in the book of the fates, and after having mixed the sacred letters they drew the cards, with the attention of scrupulously placing under the one the words of the explanation for which they searched; the sentence formed by these cards was deciphered by Jannes.

Let us suppose, for example, that a Magus had wanted to interpret the dream of Pharaoh about which we will speak presently, as they tried to imitate the miracles of Moses, and that he had drawn the Fortunate Baton, preeminent symbol of agriculture, followed by the Knight and the King [the Page is worth 1, Knight 2, Queen 3, the King 4]; that he left at the same time from the book of destiny the cards the Sun, Fortune and the Fool, this will be the first member of the sentence which he seeks. If he draws the Two and the Five of Batons, whose symbol is marked with blood, and of the sacred trumps he draws Typhoon and Death, he has obtained a kind of interpretation of the dream of the king, which may be written thus in ordinary letters:

Seven fat cows and seven thin which devour them.

Batons	The King	The Knight	2 of Batons	5 of Batons
1	4	2	--	--
The Sun	Fortune	The Fool	Typhon	Death

Natural calculation which results from this arrangement.

The Ace of Batons is worth 1. The Sun announces happiness.

The King, 4. Fortune [Preceded by a happy card.] in the same way.

The Knight, 2. The Fool or zero puts the Sun to the hundreds.

Total 7.

The sign of agriculture gives seven.

One will thus read, seven years of a fortunate agriculture will give an abundance a hundred times larger than one will ever have experienced.

The second member of this sentence, closed by the Two and the Five of Batons, gives also the number of seven which, combined with Typhon and Death, announces seven years of food shortage, famine and the evils that it involves.

This explanation will prove even more natural if one pays attention to the direction and the value of the letters that these trumps represent.

The Sun answering to *Gimel*, signifies, in this context, remuneration, happiness.

Fortune or *Lamed* means rule, law, science.

The Fool does not express anything by itself, it corresponds with the *Tau*, it is simply a sign, a mark.

Typhon or *Zain* announces inconstancy, error, faith violated, crime.

Death or *Teth* indicates the action to reap: indeed, Death is a terrible reaper.

Teleté, which in Greek means the end, seems to be, in this way, a derivative of *Teth*.

It is not difficult to find in Egyptian manners the origin of the greater part of our superstitions: for example, the practice of turning the sieve in order to discover a thief, owes its birth to the habit that these people had to mark robbers with a hot iron, of one ... T, and of one ... Samech [Tau, sign: Samech, adhesion], by putting these two characters, one on the other, to make a figure of it, *signum adherens*, which was used to announce that one should be wary of the person who bore it, by which one produces a figure which resembles a pair of scissors cutting in a circle, in a screen, which must be detached when the name of the robber is pronounced and will make it known.

Divination by the Bible, the Gospel and our Canonical Books, which is called the oracle of the saints, of which it is spoken in the 109th letter of Saint Augustine and in several Councils, among others that of Orleans; the fates of Saint Martin de Tours which were so famous, deserve to be considered an antidote to Egyptian divination by the book of destiny. It is these same presages that one drew from the Gospel, *ad apperturam libri*, when after the election of a bishop one sought to know which position he would control in the Episcopate.

But such is the fate of human things: of such a sublime science, which occupied powerful men, wise philosophers, the greatest saints, it remains among us only the practice of children to draw the beautiful letter.

VIII

Cards to which fortune tellers attach predictions.

It is like a game of Piquet where one shuffles and cuts for the interested person.

One draws a card which is named Ace, the second Seven, and thus while going up to the King: one puts aside all the cards which arrive in the order of calculation that one has just established: that is to say, if by naming Ace, Seven, or such, there is dealt an Ace, a Seven, or that which was named, it is that which it is necessary to put aside. One starts again, always until one has exhausted the cards; and if at the end there do not remain enough of cards to reach the King inclusively, one takes up the cards again, without mixing them nor cutting them, to complete the calculation to the King.

This operation of the whole deck is made three times in the same way. It is necessary to have the greatest care to arrange the cards which leave the deck, in the order which they arrive, and on the same line, which produces a hieroglyphic sentence; and here is the means of reading it.

All the picture or court cards represent the persons who may be concerned with the question; the first which arrives is always the one who it is all about.

The Kings represent sovereigns, parents, generals, magistrates, old men.

The Queens have the same character in their gender relative to the circumstances, that is to say in political matters, serious or merry: sometimes they are powerful, skilful, intriguing, faithful or fickle, are impassioned or indifferent, sometimes rivals, obliging, confidants, perfidious, etc. If there arrive two cards of same kind, it is the second which plays the supporting role.

The Pages are young people, warriors, those in love, dandies, those of the street, etc.

The Sevens and the Eights are young ladies of all kinds. The Nine of Hearts is named, preeminently, Card of the Sun, because it always announces brilliant things, pleasures, successes, especially if it is joined together with the Nine of Clubs, which is also a card of marvelous forecasts. The Nines of Diamonds indicates a delay in good or in evil.

The Nine of Spades is the worst card: it predicts only ruin, diseases, death.

The Ten of Hearts indicates the town; that of Diamonds, the countryside; Ten of Clubs, fortune, money; that of Spades, pains and sorrows.

The Aces announce letters, news.

If the four Queens arrive together, that means prattle, quarrels.

Several Pages together announce competition, argument and combats.

The Clubs in general, especially if they are drawn together, announce success, favors, fortune, money.

Diamonds, the countryside, indifference.

Hearts, satisfaction, happiness.

Spades, shortages, concern, sorrows, death.

It is necessary to have a care to arrange the cards in the same order that they are drawn, and on the same line, in order not to disturb the sentence, and to make interpretation easier.

The predicted events, in good or evil, can be more or less advantageous or unhappy, according to how the principal card which announces them is accompanied: Spades, for example, accompanied by Clubs, especially if they arrive between two Clubs, are less dangerous; similarly a Club between two Spades or coupled with a Spade, is less fortunate.

Sometimes the beginning announces disastrous accidents; but the end of the cards is favorable, if there are many Clubs; one regards the risks as reduced, more or less, according to the quantity: if they are followed by the Nine, by the Ace or the Ten, that proves that one ran great dangers, but that they passed, and that Fortune has had a change of face.

The Aces:

1 of Diamonds, 8 of Hearts, good news.

1 of Hearts, Queen of Spades, visit of a woman.

1 of Hearts, Knave of Hearts, a victory.

1, 9 and Page of Hearts, the happy lover.

1, 10 and 8 of Spades, misfortune.

1 of Spades, 8 of Hearts, a victory.

1 of Clubs, Page of Spades, friendship.

The 7s:

7 and 10 of Hearts, friendship of a young lady.

7 of Hearts, Queen of Diamonds, friendship of a woman.

7 of Diamonds, King of Hearts, delay.

The 9s:

Three Nines or three Tens, success.

The 10s:

10 of Clubs, King of Spades, a present.

10 of Clubs and Page of Clubs, a lover.

10 of Spades, Page of Diamonds, somebody anxious.

10 of Hearts, King of Clubs, sincere friendship.