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DUMMETT, Michael, MCLEOD, John. *A History of Games Played with the Tarot Pack : The Game of Triumphs, Supplement*. Oxford : Maproom Publications, 2009 ; iv-76 p. (see *ThePC*, 37, No. 4, p. 276).

(reviewed by Thierry Depaulis)

It is always good to have supplements to reference works. First because no work of scholarship can claim to be exhaustive, but also because this is a good sign of the author's awareness of their own flaws or omissions. This *Supplement* to *A History of Games Played with the Tarot Pack* is owed to the generosity of its two authors, Michael Dummett and John McLeod. It is offered for free if you just download it as a PDF from the website www.tarotgame.org or for a modest £5 fee (shipping included to whatever part of the world) if you want a paper copy.

That *A History of Games Played with the Tarot Pack* needed complements and revisions was clear from start. We are now provided with further gleanings, mainly collected by John McLeod and published in this journal. Switzerland, Austria or rather the former Austro-Hungarian Empire get substantial additions, one of the most exciting being perhaps "La Tape" from Fribourg. "La Tape", in the feminine, not "Le Tape", as a probable misprint makes it in this *Supplement*, which thus needs to be corrected... A strange mistake indeed which has crept into footnote 2 p. S 14, in the very title of the main source for the rules of this game, which has thus been wrongly "corrected"! This reference should in fact be quoted as:

Joseph Jordan, "L'un de nos plus anciens jeux de cartes: les tarots, appelés familièrement *la tape*", *La Liberté*, 4th April 1956.

It would have been helpful to add that this article was recently reproduced in the *Cartophilia Helvetica Bulletin*, 19, 4/2004, pp. 5-11.

But this is a minor detail. It is good also that the authors have at last become aware of a few 18th-century books whose first editions are older than the copies they had used. They somewhat mysteriously tell us p. S 1 that "Hans-Joachim Alscher has found an earlier edition of *Die beste und neueste Art das in den vornehmsten Gesellschaften heutiges Tages so beliebte Taroc-Spiel (...) recht und wohl zu spielen*, published in Nuremberg in 1756" and thus change their dating from 1763 to 1756, but they fail to acknowledge a still earlier edition, *Regeln bey dem Taroc-Spiele*, Leipzig, 1754, also discovered by Alscher and posted on his Internet website (www.tarock.info/Tarock_1754.htm) in 2006. (These rules were also printed in *Palamedes Redivivus*, Leipzig, 1755.) It is just two years earlier and does not reveal anything different, but it is surprising not to find it mentioned in this *Supplement*.

I agree with the authors that this changes also the dating of the appearance of four-handed Tarocchi in Lombardy (their game 6.1) and that this game "was played in Milan from about 1740 onwards" (p. S 6). It is a pity there is almost nothing on how Tarot was played in Milan in the 18th century, but I cannot follow the authors when they write, in their main book (p. 114):

"The earliest printed account of the various Tarot games played in Lombardy seems to have been contained in *Il Maestro de' Giuochi*, published in Milan in 1811". There are in fact a few books which were published before 1800 and that nobody has taken care to look at! I hereunder give a list of these titles (which I have not seen but which would be worth checking):

- *Le regole per ben giuocare a tarocco [almanacco]*. Milano, 1787

which I know only from a review that was published in the *Corriere di Gabinetto. Notizie letterarie* (or *Gazzetta di Milano*), Milan, 1787. It is not in Lensi¹.

- *Il giuoco de' tarocchi e sue regole. Trattatello unito al giornale per il corrente anno 1790*. Milano : Giambattista Bianchi, n.d. [1789]. 48, 24, [36] p. (Lensi, no. 63)

- *Per chi tarocca : almanacco critico-istruttivo per l'anno 1794*. Che contiene non solo le penali corrispondenti ai falli che commettere si puonno nel giuoco de' tarocchi, ma anche molte regole generali, e particolari, avvertimenti, ed istruzioni necessarie a sapersi da chi ha piacere di ben giuocarlo. Milano : Luigi Veladini, [1793]. 108 p.

(Although it is not in Lensi, there is a copy in the Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan [shelfmark M1542], which was shown in an exhibition in Milan in 1957.)²

- *Codice del tarocco addattato ad ogni tavoliere sì pubblico che privato*. Milano : [tip. Francesco Pulini], 1794. 78 p. (Lensi, no. 33)

There is a welcome chapter on Ferrara ('Supplement to Chapter 10') which presents Girolamo Zorli's latest reconstruction of the game alluded to by Lollo and Imperiali (1550). Dr. Zorli indeed has convincingly demonstrated that the three players played with 62 cards, not with a full 78-card pack, and Dummett and McLeod follow him. It is, however, a pity they have paid so little attention to another Ferrarese source, not much later than Lollo and Imperiali, that would shed some more light (or glow, if you prefer) on the game as played in Ferrara in the 16th century. They just mentioned this manuscript at the end of footnote 2 p. 246, but did not, in my view, take all advantage of a careful reading. This undated manuscript, titled *Discorso perchè fosse trovato il giuoco, et particolarmente quello del Tarocco*, of about 1570, is known in five copies, one of which is in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, in Paris.³

The *Discorso* states it is better to have four players, although it is "now" more often played with three ("...istituito il giuoco in quattro, se ben hora per lo più si giuoca in terzo, sendo il numero quaternario degli altri più perfetto"). The trumps are called *trionfi* – which Lollo did not make clear. The author explains that the Matto "benche faccia l'officio d'ogni carta non piglia et non è priso", and adds that "dare il Matto attorno",⁴ making combinations of trumps ("far le Bergigole"), hunting the Bagatello ("dar la caccia al Bagatello") and winning the last trick with it ("et farlo all' ultimo") were "invented by modern players for improving the game" ("sono giunte trovate da moderni per far mag[gio]re il giuoco").

It is also disappointing to see that the authors have completely neglected all my own articles! They would have found food for improvements in terms of dating. For example, I have shown that in France three-handed Tarot (game 2.1), as described in 1637, was already quite familiar around 1580.⁵ They could have added that there is now a good literary early witness for the

¹ Alfredo Lensi, *Bibliografia italiana di giuochi di carte*, Florence, 1892; facsimile edition with additions by Giampaolo Dossena and Dino Silvestroni, Ravenna, 1985.

² Caterina Santoro, *Giuochi e passatempi nei secoli passati*. Milano : Archivio Storico Civico, 1957, n° 72.

³ See Franco Pratesi, "An early praise of Italian tarot in the 16th century", *ThePC*, XV-3, 1987, pp. 80-7 and Id., "Il gioco italiano dei tarocchi e la sua storia", in: G. Berti, A. Vitali (eds.), *Le carte di corte : I tarocchi. Gioco e magia alla corte degli Estense*, Bologna, 1987, pp. 112-3 and cat. no. 46. To the three copies mentioned by Pratesi (BUB Bologna, BNC Florence, Arsenal Paris), Lucia Nadin, *Carte da gioco e letteratura tra Quattrocento e Ottocento*, Lucca, 1997, adds a further, later one in the Bibl. Apostol. Vaticana, Rome, dated 1657 (see p. 197 and fn. 53), and I have located a fifth copy in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (Ms. 6750, no. 37).

⁴ Meaning unclear: giving the Fool around? – or should we read *attorno* as *a turno* and therefore understand "giving the Fool in its turn"?

⁵ See Thierry Depaulis, "Étienne Tabourot et le tarot", *Le Vieux Papier*, no. 379, 2006, pp. 386-92.

Bolognese/Florentine order of trumps with a *Strambotti de triumphi* of around 1500⁶ and that the earliest record of *minchiate*, as *germini*, could be set to 1534.⁷ They could have told their readers that “‘trionfi’ cards – tarot cards! – were also among the goods that reached Rome as early as 1474.”⁸ while other early datings for *tarocco* were to be found in my recent article “Entre *farsa* et *barzulletta*: jeux de cartes italiens autour de 1500”,⁹ which seems to have been unnoticed.

Back to Chapter 7 (‘Tarok-l’Hombre’), which would have deserved a few upgrades, let me offer here another ‘first’. While the authors wrote in their main book (p. 126) that the “first appearance of the game in the card-game books known to us is in *Der beliebte Weltmensch* (BW) published in Vienna in 1795”, I have found that the game is already mentioned in a mock-poem written in the Milanese dialect by Domenico Balestrieri (Milan 1714-1780), *Spassatemp del Tizziræu e del Mennapses, Capp de la Badia di Meneghitt, sora la Resposta con l’annotazion e la P. S. al sciur abbaa Parin de l’autor di duu dialegh de la lengua toscana*, Milan, Antoni Agnell, 1760, where two verses say: “A tarocch-ombra, per ris’cia cappott / L’è necessari de scarta anch el matt.”

As far as Tarok-l’Hombre with a talon is concerned, I have uncovered an interesting Italian link between the ‘later’ version of Tarok-l’Hombre (game 7.2), which was described in 1797, and the modern Stubai Valley (Tyrol) game, known as Droggn (game 7.5). A similar game, though earlier and in Italian, can be drawn from a simple list of technical words given under the entry TAROC, in Giambattista Azzolini (1777-1853), *Vocabolario vernacolo-italiano pei distretti roveretano e trentino, opera postuma del Profess. Giambattista Azzolini, prete roveretano ; compendiato e dato alla luce da G. B.*, Venice, 1856.

A French-suited Tarock pack with an unspecified number of cards – presumably 78 – is used where the suit signs are called *caro* or *quadro* (Diamonds), *cori* (Hearts), *pichi* (Spades), *fiori* (Clubs). The Fool is called ‘*el mat*’, or ‘*el schiz*’, or ‘*sghiz*’, an obvious borrowing from the German *Sküs*; to play the Fool is *sguizzar*. The Pagat is ‘*el bagat*’, or like in the Stubai Valley game ‘*el piccol*’ (the small one). The bids are very similar to those in Tyrol: *a una* (glossed “entro, o pigliare una carta” – “I enter, or pick up one card”); *en solo*, explained as “cioè carte da far da sè solo, senza comperar la carta”; *en sopra solo*, “cioè carte da far giuoco, senza neppur le carte del monte” (i.e. play the game without even the talon); *todos* (or *cappotto*), winning all tricks.

There clearly is a talon since the highest bid refers to a *monte*, thus implying that the cards in excess are put on the table. Some extra scoring seems to have been added with at least a declaration of *cavalleria* for a set of all four courts in one suit. As it is Roveretano-Trentino Taroc looks like a perfect transitional game, sharing its basics with the ‘later’ Tarocc’Ombre and its bids with Stubai Droggn, played in a valley neighbouring Trentino (formerly South-Tyrol). It also mixes German terminology (*caro*, *schiz* or *sghiz*, *cavalleria*) with traditional Italian names (*mat*, *bagat*, *una*, *solo*) and even some... Spanish (*todos*)!

So, as we can see, there is room for more supplements... and perhaps, as a wish, for an overview of the evolution and spread of the games played with Tarot cards (with better, more detailed maps). Let’s hope they will turn up.

⁶ T. Depaulis, “Early Italian Lists of Tarot Trumps”, *ThePC*, 36-1, 2007, pp. 39-50, Section 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Section 3.

⁸ T. Depaulis, “Playing cards in Rome – 15th-17th centuries”, *ThePC*, 36-3, 2008, pp. 205-11.

⁹ *ThePC*, 37-2, 2008, p. 89-102.