

## RULES FOR PLAYING THE GAME OF TAROCCHI

The game called *giuco dei Tarocchi* or *Tarochini* (from Arabic *turuquîn* 'wayfarers,' 'wayfaring jugglers,' *il giuco dei tarocchi* 'the game of the wayfaring people,' whence French '*tarot des Bohémiens*') came to Europe from Italy in the 14th century. According to a plausible suggestion of William Andrew Chatto (1848) they were brought to England by soldiers serving under Sir John Hawkwood in the wars of Italy and Spain. The rules for playing it vary slightly in different countries, but the basic 'code' is the Italian, more particularly the one observed in Piemont.

The twenty-one *atouts* or trump-cards (from Italian *trionfi* or *a tutti*), known as the *tarocchi* (in French corrupted to *tarot* pronounced *taro*) are marked with Roman numerals and decorated with emblematic figures that have—in modern practice—nothing to do any longer with the game as such, but are all important, for those who use such cards for the purpose of soothsaying. The old traditional names of these tarocchi or trumps are: I the *bagatto*, French *bâteleur*, English 'Juggler' or 'Joker.' II The Pope. III The Empress. IV The Emperor. V The Pope. VI The Enamoured or Amor. VII The Chariot. VIII Justice. IX The Hermit. X The Wheel of Fortune. XI Force. XII The Hanged One. XIII Death. XIV Temperance. XV The Devil. XVI The House of God (originally of Jupiter) or The Thunder. XVII The Star. XVIII The Moon. XIX The Sun. XX The Judgment or the Angel. XXI The World.

Still another similar card without any number is called 'The Fool' or 'The Excuse.'

Of these '*tarocchi*' the higher number 'beats,'

'lifts' or 'takes' the lower, with the exception of 'the Angel' (XX) which takes the XXI called '*il Mondo*' 'the World'—originally meaning 'the World-Empire' for which the 'four kings' of the four Great Powers in the East, North, West and South were supposed to fight, as in the Indian four-handed chess-game called *Chaturaji* 'Four Kings.'

Besides these emblematic numeral cards—sometimes marked also with the twenty-one letters of the Hebrew alphabet—and the twenty-second without any number called 'The Fool' or 'The Excuse,' there are the so-called 'court' or 'coat-cards'—four kings, each worth 5 points; four queens, each worth 4 points; four chevaliers (knights on horse-back), each worth 3 points; four 'valets' or knaves, worth 2 points. The Angel Æon or Judgment (trump Nr. XX) and the *Bagatto* (French *Bâteleur*), 'Magician Juggler' or 'Joker' (trump Nr. I) count 5, the 'Fool' (No. 0) counts 4. In the games called 'Thirty-one' and 'Sixteen the 'Fool' counts for 1 only and is taken by the 'Juggler.'

The four suits of 'court,' coats or colour-cards are marked with four kinds of 'pips': clubs, hearts, diamonds (French *Carreaux*) spades (French *piques*) or wands, cups, swords, and disks. The Knight takes the Queen, the Queen the Prince, the Prince the Princess.

There are, moreover, in each suit, ten pip-cards marked with from one to ten pips of the respective 'colour.'

The one pip-card is called the ace (Latin *as*=unit from Tarentine *ās*=Greek *εἷς*='one'), the two-pips card is the 'deuce' (=French *deux*). In the clubs and spades the higher number of pips on a card beats the lower, in the hearts and diamonds the contrary rule is observed. In Central Europe and the Balkans the set or pack of cards is reduced from 78 to 54, the suits of the black pip-cards showing only the numbers from ten

The following are the main rules of the Piemontese code :

1. Before starting whatever game is played, chance decides who takes 'the pack' or 'the bunch' (*il mazzo*). To determinate this, one of the players shuffles the cards. The first player to 'hold the bunch' will be he who draws the first trump—or whatever other card the players will select for this purpose.

2. Before dealing the cards he who 'holds the bunch' offers the pack to his left-hand neighbour to be cut. If this player does not want to divide the pack, it is offered to the player on his left, if this one declines, to the one on the left of the first and so forth. If nobody wants to divide, the cards are distributed by the 'holder of the bunch' as they lie.

3. If a card is uncovered in the act of shuffling or dealing, the bunch-holder asks whether he is to start anew. If this is required, he begins shuffling them again and offers the pack round again to be cut, although the set may not yet have been seen by anyone.

4. He who deals the pack must announce how many cards he will give to each player at a time. This announcement must be made before the pack is cut and if, in the course of distribution, he wants to vary the number of cards to be dealt to each person he must ask permission from the other players or pay as if he had lost a 'simple game.'

5. If the bunch-holder makes a mistake in dealing out the pack—*e.g.*, gives a card less or a card more to one player—he pays the game. Equally the game has to be played by the player who in 'cutting the pack' looks at the card which remains at the bottom of the part he 'raises.'

6. Before dealing the cards the dealer must ask the

company (a) whether they want to play 'the roll' (*rola*) or the *marcio*—in Central Europe 'beggary'—*marcio* meaning a game in which the adversary is not allowed to take a single trick; (b) how many points are needed to become '*smarcio*' ('beggared'), i.e., to have beaten the opponent 'level' (*marcio*) and if (c) having either the Fool or the talon (*scarto*, French *écart*), or the talon (*scarto*) and the Fool, the *rola*-game is to be considered lost. This is decided according to whether the company desires to play the one or the other game. All this has to be settled before the cards are dealt. It must also be fixed how much is to be staked on the 'simple game,' whichever of the two may be selected.

7. If he who deals the cards notices that he has made a wrong distribution, he must announce it before he puts down the talon (*scario écart*), so as not to lose 'the hand.'

8. He who receives the pack for cutting it can forgo the cutting or have it done by another player.

9. As soon as the cards are dealt, no conversation is permitted, no looking into another player's cards, or signalling of any sort is allowed, especially if more than two people play. The transgressor of this rule pays a fine settled beforehand.

10. If, whether by mistake or distraction, a player deals out cards to one of the company to which this person is not entitled, he must stop as soon as he notices his error or is advised of it by another. The re-assembled cards are then handed to the supernumerary person waiting to take part in the game. He who does this either maliciously or repeatedly pays a penalty fixed beforehand for such mistakes. If the mistake is noticed after the talon is laid, the cards are supposed to be well dealt, but the culprit pays the stake of the 'simple game' to all players and the round will go on in turn as if no mistake had occurred.

11. In this game a man's word must be taken as valid. If one of the players declares that he is willing to throw up his hand the resulting loss must be accepted by those incurring it.

12. He who plays a card when it is not his turn must take it back immediately, if two persons play. If more people play, he must pay the customary or pre-arranged fine and take it back. It is necessary to play one's card only after mature reflexion, for once played it cannot be withdrawn.

13. The player may count his own tricks, but not, in the course of the game, those of another player; therefore it is necessary always to remember the cards not yet played. these decide the final result of the game.

14. He who announces to have 'discarded' one or more of his cards against cards of the talon and then regrets it and would exchange the cards again cannot do so, even if the error is manifest. One cannot discard the 'honours,' *i.e.*, the King, the Angel, the Fool and the Joker (*Bagatto*), except in the case when the Joker is alone with the Fool. The Fool can only be discarded in the one case that you are sure to make the '*rola*.' In some games, *e.g.*, the one called '*a permesso*' ('with permission') the Fool can be exchanged against another card.

15. He who inadvertently or maliciously 'renounces,' *i.e.*, follows the card played with a card of another suit for want of another of the right colour, will be punished by paying the 'simple game' to his partners, unless the cards are still on the table and neither withdrawn nor covered. In this case he who has played first leaves his own card erroneously played. The other players acquire the right to exchange the card played by them against another of the same sequence.

16. Finally it is necessary to follow exactly the score of one's own and the other player's tricks.

With the tarocchi cards about twenty various games can be played. The following are best known:

'Eleven and a half'; 'Fifteen'; 'Sixteen'; 'Thirty-one and more'; 'Thirty-one and less'; 'Three playing up to twenty-five'; 'Four players' or the 'Party game'; 'Sixty-three'; 'Calling the King'; 'With Permission'; 'Simple game between three, four or five'; 'With Curtailed Permission'; 'With *Bagatto ultimo* declared'; 'Doctor's game'; 'The mitigated game between two and the dead man'; (*German*: 'Man of Straw'); The 'mitigated' game between two players with the complete talon; The 'mitigated' game between two players with the complete talon; The council game with the whole bunch of *tarocchi*. The 'Curtailed' council.

Most of them have by now gone out of fashion. The most usual are the game played between four players and the 'Twenty-five for three.'

I. *Tarocchi* for four players. 'Foul play' *i.e.*, irregular dealing loses the right to deal, *i.e.*, the hand. If such a mistake occurs in the ultimate deal he who is responsible loses the simple game, if the number of points necessary to win it does not exceed 36 points. If he who has made the mistake had already scored 36 points or less the game is neither won or lost. Because of the loss of 36 points for 'foul play,' the 'peace' or 'parity' remains. But he must pay the stake of 10 points and his successor does the new deal. The entire stake of the simple game must, however, be paid if the 'renounce' (the failure to reply to the card played) is done maliciously. Discarding *tarocchi* is licit if there are no other cards. But discarding 'honours' is absolutely forbidden. Every honour counts 5 points.

II. *Tarocchi* 'for three unto 25' (points). 'Foul play' committed in the first or second deal, causes the 'hand' to be lost and obliges the culprit to pay the

stake of 5 points to each adversary. If it occurs in the third 'hand,' *i.e.*, in the last deal, he who committed 'foul play' loses the game, if the culprit has not passed beyond the 26 points; otherwise he will be credited with the points beyond 26 but will pay the simple stake to the player on his right who will deal the cards anew, paying 'double,' *i.e.* the stake of 10 points to the third player who, through the error of 'foul play,' has lost the advantage of the second dealing.

As soon as one of the players has reached the limit of points when he cannot lose the game any more, *i.e.*, when he has in the last deal more than 26 points, he will be obliged to play 'from outside.' That means that his cards will be considered 'immobilised' so that he cannot any longer draw any advantage from them against those who have less points. He will therefore give them to that one of the players who, judging impartially, needs them more. If he breaks this rule he has to pay the stake of 5 points to each adversary. Equally so, any 'renounce,' *i.e.*, the failure to follow up the card played, is penalised by the payment of the stake of 5 points to each adversary. The card unjustly taken must be restored. If this is done maliciously the pre-arranged sum must be paid—the basic principle being that he who 'renounces' pays. He who discards one of the 'honours' pays the game.

Swiss *Tarocchi* has the same rules: 25 cards are given to each of the three players. He who deals may take one of the three remaining cards exchanging them against three of his own in order to better his hand. He who first reaches the previously settled number of points wins the stipulated sum. But the value of the cards is somewhat different. The Universe, the King and the Juggler count for 5 points, the Queen 4, the Prince and the Fool 3.

In all these various games he who has dealt the cards

declares whether he 'plays' or 'passes.' Any other player can declare '*contra*,' *i.e.*, indicate the *he* 'counters' the game. This means that the stake settled for the 'simple game' is doubled. He then declares whether he 'takes up' a card from the talon or plays 'without the talon.' The latter is called 'to push' (French *pousses*). He who 'takes up' wins or loses 'the beast,' *i.e.*, the stake of the 'simple' or 'countered game' plus or minus the value of the points required for winning it. He who 'pushes' wins or loses 10 points more than he who 'takes up.'

A player can declare to play '*solo*,' *i.e.*, to play without a partner against the two or three others, having 'taken up' a card from the talon, or even to play '*solissimo*,' *i.e.*, against all the others without 'taking' anything from the talon. By how much the stake is increased in every case has to be settled beforehand.