

Recommended name:

Tarot de Marseille, Type I

Alternative name: Tarot of Marseille(s)

History

In *The Game of Tarot* (1980) Michael Dummett has outlined three variant traditions for Tarot in Italy, that differ in the order of the highest trumps, and in grouping the virtues together or not. He has called these three traditions A, B, and C. A is centered on Florence and Bologna, B on Ferrara, and C on Milan. It is from Milan that the so-called Tarot de Marseille stems. This standard pattern seems to have flourished in France in the 17th and 18th centuries, perhaps first in Lyon (not Marseille!), before spreading to large parts of France, Switzerland, and later to Northern Italy (Piedmont, Lombardy and Liguria).

Although Marseille is a 'late-comer' in the making of Tarot cards, it was clearly the main producer in the second half of the 18th century, and sole producer in the 19th. The name **Tarot de Marseille** was coined in the 19th century by both scholars and occultists. It has remained so until now, and S. Mann and M. Dummett have adopted it.

If 17th-century examples are extremely rare, there are many 18th-century Tarots made in Lyon, Grenoble, Dijon, as well as Marseille, and Switzerland. Thanks to this relatively large number of tarot packs, it has been remarked that there are two slightly distinct types, which Thierry Depaulis (Depaulis 2013) has called **Type I** and **Type II**. Here we present the main features of **Type I**.

Characteristic features

The **Tarot of Marseille** has Italian suits.

The name and order of the 22 trumps are the following: The Fool; 1 The Juggler; 2 The Popess; 3 The Empress; 4 The Emperor; 5 The Pope; 6 The Lovers; 7 The Charlot; 8 Justice; 9 The Hermit; 10 The Wheel of Fortune; 11 Strength; 12 The Hanged Man; 13 (Death); 14 Temperance; 15 The Devil; 16 The House of God; 17 The Star; 18 The Moon; 19 The Sun; 20 Judgement; 21 The World.

Usually the trumps have roman numbers and the titles are in French language.

According to Depaulis (2013) the distinguishing cards for the **Type I** of the **Tarot de Marseille** are: **The Fool** is called 'LE FOL', **Trump III** (Emperor) shows a 4 in Arabic figure in front of him, **Trump V** (Pope) has a crosier, **Trump VI** (Love): the winged Cupid is blindfold and hairless (he wears a kind of helmet), he flies from right to left, **Trump VII** (Chariot): the top of the canopy is undulating, **Trump VIII** (Justice): the figure is winged, **Trump XV** (Devil): the Devil has a human face on his belly, and his wings are large, **Trump XVI** (Tower): the flames come out of the tower toward the Sun, **Trump XVIII** (Moon) is seen full face, **Trump XXI** (World): a somewhat androgynous central figure stands up on her/his two legs, dressed with a kind of 'trunks' made of tree leaves and wearing a cape. **Type I** is clearly pre-1700; it is older than Type II.

Composition

78 cards. 4 suits of single-figure court (King, Queen, Cavalier, Jack) and 10 pip cards, plus 21 single-figure numbered trumps and The Fool.

Some makers

Nicolas Rolichon, Lyon (17th century), Jean Noblet, Paris (ca. 1670); Jean-Pierre Payen, Avignon (1713); Jean Dodal, Lyon (c.1715); Jean Payen, Avignon (1743); Italy: Giuseppe Ottone, Seravalle, Piedmont (1736), Antonio Comastri, "Al Soldato", Bologna (c.1745), Cosmo Antonio Toso, Genoa (ca. 1770); Giacomo Draghi, Finale, (early 19th century).

Some references

Dummett, Michael: *The Game of Tarot*. London, 1980; Kaplan, Stuart: *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, Vol. II, Stamford, 1986, p. 270ff; Depaulis, Thierry: "The 'Tarot de Marseille' – Facts and Fallacies", *The Playing-Card*, Vol. 42, no. 1 and no. 2 (2 parts), 2013; Depaulis, Thierry (with John McLeod): *Le Tarot révélé: une histoire du tarot d'après les documents*, La Tour-de-Peilz, 2013.

Tarot de Marseille, Type I, court- and some pip-cards.



Jean-Pierre Payen, Avignon, 1713 (Fac-simile edition by Yves Reynaud, Marseille, 2016).

Tarot de Marseille, Type I, court- and some pip-cards.



Jean-Pierre Payen, Avignon, 1713 (Fac-simile edition by Yves Reynaud, Marseille, 2016).

Tarot de Marseille Type I, selection of trumps including the characteristic ones.



Jean-Pierre Payen, Avignon, 1713 (Fac-simile edition by Yves Reynaud, Marseille, 2016).