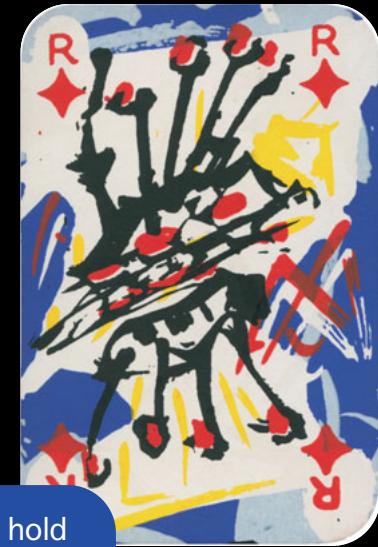
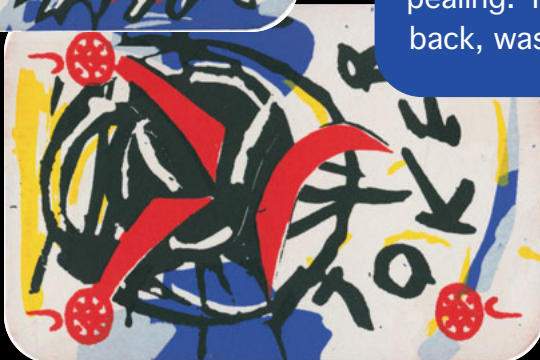


Can playing cards really be weapons? Cardboard weapons? Hard to believe, but true. This shows the impressive exhibition "Kartonnen Wapens" in the National Museum of Playing Cards in Turnhout/Belgium until the end of 2014. Those who were attending the yearly meeting of Belgian and Dutch collectors in the museum could already see the presentation: a gloomy gangway, modelled on the trenches of the First World War, leads deep and deeper into a grim scenery. Blood-red captions, the silhouette of a „Landser“, a doughboy, with its rifle at the ready, barbed wire... dead silence otherwise. One would take fright, but for the harmless-looking playing cards on display. „Innocent“ though were they not at all as the show demonstrates. On the contrary. They were a perfect medium for all sort of propaganda. For the First World War was much duller than we can imagine. Bullets did not whiz by nonstop. Hours and days elapsed waiting, nothing but waiting. And as there was no smartphone around, no Facebook or Twitter, soldiers whiled away the time with playing cards. And the cards showed glorious generals from the own ranks – or scathing caricatures of the enemy. Techies learned by playing about the newest weapons like tanks, zeppelins and submarines, obviously those of the own nation. That is why the First World War „also was a paper war“ as curator Filip Cremers writes. In Germany, the playing cards as an important means of propaganda were even graded „essential to war“ – like ammunition. Military people taken apart, another profession gained from the gunfire in those days of great incertitude: the fortune tellers à la Mademoiselle Lenormand.

<http://www.speelkaartenmuseum.be>



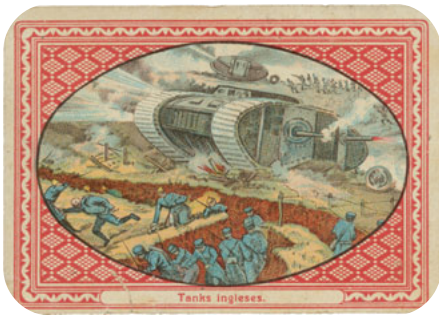
„Don't play with that!“ No, you don't play with that. Of course not. You just hold such cards in your hands, almost piously, one by one. Those intense colors – lapis lazuli-blue, fire-red, but most of all the matt ink-black – act as a wake. You become immersed in the impetuous lines, determined to identify a pattern, anything that could give orientation. But the artist seems to count on the suggestive power of his abstract compositions in the style of the „wild painting“. Julius Baltazar is a painter, illustrator and graphic designer, born in Paris under the name of Jules Lambion in 1949. He is said to have been a loser at school, which did not impair at all his later career. Salvador Dalí must have perceived his talent. However, he took him under his wing and from then on, it obviously went steep uphill for him. With friends writers from the Paris scene like Fernando Arrabal he created small, fine books as unique specimens or in very small editions. That is why it does not surprise much that the playwright and poet Arrabal has written a kind of introduction, a homage to this limited edition deck. Brief and a bit mysterious. And for that reason, all the more appealing. The double deck in its wooden case, one with a blue, the other with a red back, was published by Edition Luc Moreau in Paris in 1982.



Il a été tiré de ce jeu de cartes
de Julius Baltazar
500 exemplaires
numérotés et signés
L'impression en sérigraphie
est de l'ATELIER 87

238 / 500
Julius Baltazar





Normally do the cards in a pack always have the same backs – same pattern, same color. You would otherwise divulge far too many details to your rivals. All the more unusual when this Spanish deck of cards presents on the entirety of the backs a kaleidoscope of battles of the First World War. Simeón Durá, the Valencia cardmaker, has designed this "Baraja Bélica" on behalf of the chocolate Angelical from Barcelona. You will find there fight scenes with tanks, then employed for the first time. Others show the naval battle in the Dardanelles strait in Turkey, the thunder of cannons on the Somme in France, the sinking of the torpedoed passenger liner „Lusitania“ off Ireland, to name but four of the 48. Dramatic events with world-spanning consequences. Yet Simeón Durá has mainly packed them in pastel tones. And so they remember of chromos in children's books from past decades. Too much drama did not indeed get along well with sweet chocolate.

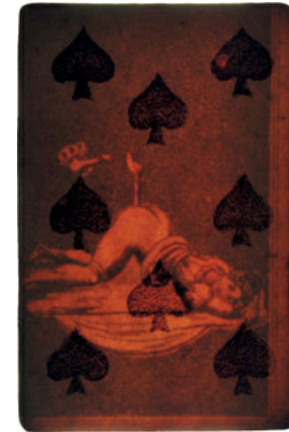
Portrayed are also the representatives of the corresponding armed forces: heads of government and commanders of the Central Powers on the one hand and those of the Entente on the other hand. Only Serbia is absent, as the collector and researcher E. García Martín remarks. Although that is where the war had begun with a bombshell – the deadly attempt on Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the designated heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. This would suggest that the war had long taken its own course independently from its actuator when the chocolate maker let print the deck in 1916. One more thing: Spain remained neutral among the power struggles, but it supplied the Entente with strategic goods. Can it really be a coincidence that the male-martial suit signs of swords and clubs are occupied by the Entente while their adversaries, the Central Powers, fill the rather female-defensive symbols of cups and coins?



A candy for connoisseurs

This deck of cards is an outright rarity. For it hides a secret that opens up only to connoisseurs. Artless people would need to hope for a happy hap in order to come behind it. For it looks like many others at first sight: the courts show French rulers together with queens and knaves after the model of the „Cartes Royales“, the „Royal Cards“ by Armand-Gustave Houbigant (1790 - 1863). Just bizarre that many a part of the displayed figures is accurately colored, but others are not, and this consistently below the waistline. Experts sense the reason, reach for a strong lamp... and discover the game **U N D E R** the game: erotic pictures of the unvarnished/coarse kind. It just abounds with erected penisses, flying vulvas, copulating couples in acrobatic postures and all sorts of sexual varieties. Grotesque scenes are also there like that one on the 8 of spades: a woman with a burning candle in her bottom stretches it out in order to lure a penis in the shape of a mosquito. Or the 9 of clubs. That card shows a woman on her knees amusing herself with a dildo. What does that actually mean, „amusing herself“! No trace of delight, even less of ecstasy in the miens of the clandestine actors and actresses. Let alone in the faces of the visible figures. The perfect camouflage, the more so as the cardmaker pays due respect to personalities of (alleged) moral integrity. King of diamonds for example represents Louis IX, king of France and leader of two crusades. Because of his flawless, devout lifestyle, he was already considered as a „holy“ man in his own time, and was indeed canonized in 1297. To portray him, the irreproachable one, with an erected penis, would have been around 1835, when the pack came out, a colossal affront and instantly called in censors and policemen. But our seemingly so harmless deck wholly was beyond suspicion.

„Honni soit qui mal y pense“
(Shame on him who thinks ill of it).



Editions Luc Moreau, Paris. *Playing Card Deck Baltazar.* Design: Julius Baltazar (born 1949). 2 x 52 + JJ (all different) + EC, complete. Screenprint, 89x59 mm, round corners, 4 French index marks. Backs: Artistic pattern in shades of blue, or reddish brown. Maker's name on an extra card. 1982.

All cards are illustrated with motifs in the style of the Wild Painting. **The deck is numbered 238/500 and signed by the artist.**

In the original wooden case, text folder (praise of the artist by Fernando Arrabal), almost mint.

US\$ 308.00

€ 220,-

Simeón Durá, Valencia. *Baraja Bélica (War Card).* Chocolate Angelical. *Poker Español. El Cid.* 47/48 (6 of Clubs missing, joined as a color copy). Chromolith., 89x63 mm, round corners, 4 index marks. Backs: Oval scenes of the 1st World War, in the background a panel with a plaid pattern, red.

Maker's name on Ace of Coins and 5 of Swords, trademark ("EL CID") on 4 of Cups. 1916.

Lit.: Denning coll. 2 p. 20 (729); F. Carrión in *La Sota* 14 (Simeón Durá) p. 17; E. García Martín in *La Sota* 20 pp. 11-16 and in *La Sota* 32 pp. 6-8.

All cards carry at top and bottom an ad of the chocolate brand from Barcelona. The figures are otherwise a variant of the Castile pattern created by Fournier. **Indeed, the peculiarity of our deck lies in its backs, which display 48 DIFFERENT oval scenes from WW1.** This type of design is quite rare for playing cards. For obvious reasons as the cards cannot be used for play any longer. A well-known specimen of this species is the *Wüst* deck with Swiss views from the end of the 19th century. Instead of sedate Switzerland – or of a picturesque Spain, S. Durá has chosen to depict the murderous war. That is why the backs of the aces portray rulers and commanders from some of the participating countries: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire for the Central Powers (aces of coins and cups) as well as France, Great Britain, Russia and Italy for the Entente (aces of swords and clubs). As E. García remarks, Serbia is not – or no longer – mentioned which in our opinion would suggest that, by that time (1916), the war had long taken its own course independently from its actuator, the murder of the designated heir to Habsburg throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, by a Serbian assassin. The other cards are dedicated to war-related events on land, at sea and in the air. Named places are Mulhouse, Paris, Gallipoli, Doggerbank, Tannenberg, Ancre, Warsaw, Charleroi, Lodz, Maubeuge, Verdun, Marne, East Prussia, Antwerp, Lemberg, Przemysl, Champagne, Liege, Jutland, Iwongorod, Somme, Guise, Dardanelles, London, Falklands, Gorizia, Coronel, Metz, Riga, Carpathians, Masuria, Yper and Heligoland. One card addresses the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*, others show the submarine war, British tanks, poison gas attacks, zeppelins... A true compendium of a world on fire.

4 of Coins soiled and with a small marginal tear, 2 corners of 9 of Cups somewhat damaged, tiny stamp in the lower margin of 4 of Cups, slightly worn - worn.

US\$ 392.00

€ 280,-

Maker unknown. *Erotic deck.* 32, complete. **Hand- and stencil-col. etching, partially enhanced with gilt,** 81x53 mm, square corners, no index mark. Backs: Pale pink. Circa 1835.

Lit.: Comp. (*Cartes Royales*) D'Allemagne I 150-153, Cary coll. 293, Hoffmann/Dietrich 1987 No. 15, AdT 31 p. 5-10, *Révolution* [1989] No. 74; comp. (translucent cards) Cary coll. 378; NOT in *Eroticism*.

Translucent cards, closely modelled on the second edition of the *Cartes Royales (Royal Cards)* by Armand-Gustave Houbigant (1790-1863). The courts are named. The kings portray French rulers: CHARLES (Charlemagne, spades), ST LOUIS (Louis IX, diamonds), FRANÇOIS I (clubs) and HENRI IV (hearts). The queens are their spouses, parents or contemporaries (MARGUERITE DE VALOIS, JEANNE D'ALBRET...), the jacks famous warriors (ROLAND, BAYARD...) Held against the light, they let appear, apart from the more common scenes – which now and again require a certain aptitude for acrobatics, a number of fancy sceneries: on the 8 of spades, a naked woman lies prone in her bed, she raises her buttocks aloft in which a burning candle sticks in order to attract a winged penis flying around as a mosquito; a satyr with goat's legs steps to the right and captures in a bag the fart of a youngling flattering over him (8 of diamonds); on the ace of diamonds, a woman with uplifted arms and naked butt flees from a spurting war cripple pursuing her with raised sabre... Remarkable is the fact that the hidden pictures almost always take account of the arrangement of the suit signs on the numerals, a factor that is no longer minded in the more recent decks. For example, all tens show small homogeneous scenes in a frame of clouds, and 3 of the 4 nines such scenes that are splitted between top and bottom. Also unusual: the queen of diamonds of the *Royal Cards* is BLANCHE DE CASTILLE, she holds in her hand a charter with the inscription „Régence“ (regency, which she assumed for her son Louis IX). The scroll is here reshaped into a rather baddish camouflaged condom! Clothes and hairdresses point to the years 1830-1840.

Somewhat damaged slipcase, worn.

US\$ 3,150.00

€ 2.250,-



KARTONNEN WAPENS



HET KAARTSPEL TIJDENS DE EERSTE WERELDOORLOG



CARTORAMA

Schlossgasse 1

D - 99837 Dankmarshausen

Tel. +49 36922 439750

Mobile +49 176 32841412

E-mail: cartorama@cartorama.de

Internet: www.cartorama.de