

The Game of Hope

Introduction

The following is the first English translation of the 4pp instruction leaflet accompanying the “Game of Hope” cards held in the British Museum as *Das Spiel der Hoffnung* [Reg. 1896, 0501.495]. These cards, authored by J. K. Hechtels, were published c. 1800 by G. P. J. Bieling of Nuremberg. The instructions offer game-playing rules and a simple story-telling means of fortune-telling.

Their connection as a prototype of all following “petit Lenormands” was made in 1972 by Prof. Detlef Hoffmann and Erika Kroppenstedt in *Wahrsagekarten: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Okkultismus* (quoted in Decker, Depaulis & Dummett, *A Wicked Pack of Cards*, 1996).

The cards exist in a number of museums, and Tarot Professionals recently paid for a high quality photograph to be taken of the deck and made available on the British Museum website. Following our additional visits to the museum and notes, we are able to offer this full English translation of the instructions by Steph Myriel Es-Tragon.

We have also been informed that the British Museum will be also photographing the pamphlet and making it available shortly. The cards themselves have been licensed exclusively to Tarot Professionals for publication as a deck, “The Original Lenormand” in a limited edition of 250 copies. These will be published June-July 2012.

We believe that the translation below gives some indication of how the cards would have been viewed at the time of their origination in terms of interpretation as an oracle. This will be explored further in our Lenormand book to be published by Llewellyn in 2013. Whilst some of these interpretations may be readily obvious – the fox represents cunning – others are perhaps revelatory, such as the book actually being seen as a “hex” (spell) book.

It is also apparent that the cards are divided into favourable and unfavourable cards, or indifferent, where no particular forfeit or reward is taken. We also examine in the book the origins of this system in early games of morality and teaching. This is one area that can be further explored to develop Lenormand reading into more spiritual interpretations in addition to mundane fortune-telling, without layering it with esotericism or complexity.

How these games might have created “traditional” meanings, merged with other cartomantic streams will also be explored in our forthcoming book. There are also several articles on the subject of the Lenormand cards in *Tarosophist International* V.1 Iss. 15.

We hope you enjoy this translation and you might even attempt to use the “Original Lenormand” cards to play the game as well as for divination and fortune-telling.

The Translation

The Game of Hope

With a new figure card in illuminated 36 sheets.

2nd improved edition

This game can be played with as many people as want to take part, and every player puts 6 to 8 marks into a pot. The 36 illuminated sheets are laid out in a square, that is, in 6 rows of 6 sheets each according to the numbers on top of the cards, that is 1, 2, 3 and so on, up to 36.

After every player has taken up a mark or sign, each in turn casts two ordinary dice. Each player moves their mark the number of pips cast starting at the first card. For example, a player who has cast 4 and 1 moves to the fifth card. When it is the turn of this person for the second time, he moves the number of the pips starting from the 5th card and so on until the end of the game.

The order of the game can be determined by the dice, for example it may be agreed that the player with the highest number of pips will begin the game and the one with the lowest number will start last. If two people cast the same number of pips, they are equal and they have to throw again.

On each of the 36 sheets when a player puts his mark down he meets with a figure there, which is favourable or unfavourable or indifferent to him. I call those sheets indifferent which have no influence on the progress or regress of the game, but where the mark remains standing quietly until the next round.

The following sheets are favourable or unfavourable:

No. 3: The one, who throws 3 pips and thus gets to the Ship, will be happily taken by this ship to the Canary Islands, where the well-known beautiful birds are at home, no. 12.

No. 4: On entry in this House, two marks have to be given up to the doorkeeper.

6: The Thundercloud drives back to no. 2

7: To stay safe from the bite of this dangerous Snake, 3 marks have to be paid

8: The one who gets to this Coffin is deemed to be dead until another player comes to this sheet or until he casts a double, for when it his turn to roll the dice he is not excluded.

11: So as not to be castigated by this Rod, one pays two marks. For this one can move forward two more sheets – to the Lad on No. 13

14. The cunning Fox leads the player astray and he has to find refuge in the Wood at no. 5.

16: Arriving at the Star of good prospects, the player receives 6 marks

19: To enjoy the pleasant vista from the Tower, one pays 2 marks

21: On these steep Alps, the player has to remain until another arrives to release him or he has to cast a double

22: Unnoticed, this path leads around the mountains right back to the Garden at no. 20

24: Whoever wins this Heart, will immediately offer it to the Youth at no. 28 or to the Girl at no. 29. That is to say, if the player arriving at the card 24 is a woman, she will move up to 28, if it is a man to 29.

25. Whoever finds this Ring, gets 3 marks

26. Whoever reads in this Grimoire will by a hex therein be forcefully returned to the Garden in No. 20

27. Whoever receives this Letter has to pay a fee of 2 marks for the bearer.

28. This Youth leads on to the brilliant Sun of hope in no. 31. However for those who got here by way of the Heart, No. 24, this does not happen. They wait here for the next turn.

29. The Girl leads on to no. 32, unless one has come here through the Heart.

33. On reaching this Key, one receives 2 marks.

34. Reaching the Fish, one has to pay 2 marks.

35. This is the most important sheet of the whole game, insofar as the one, who comes to stay on this picture of Hope, has won the game and draws the whole cash-box or deposit.

36. So near to the luckiest field, the player is cheated as against his will he has to advance one step too far to the figure of the Cross, where he has to remain until another player takes this burden off him or he throws a double.

If a player casts a number, which leads over the 36 cards, he has to count back as many numbers as he would move beyond the 36. For example, he stands on 32 and casts 8, therefore he has to go back 4 numbers, because these are in excess of 36 and comes to stay at 28.

Also, it is not possible to take the cash-box by counting back an excess to 36 but only in the advance movement, for example, if someone stands at 29 and casts a 6, he arrives in orderly fashion at the Anchor of Hope and has won the whole game.

If players want to add more variety to the entertainment of the game, say, by working in riddles, forfeits etc., this is easily done and any party will be able to find sheets to which these can be added as rewards or penalties. For example, the sheets no. 2, 5, 9, 13, 15, 18, 23, 30, 32, 36 may be declared as forfeits, whenever they are reached in the orderly way, on 10, 12, 17, 20, 29, 35 it is required to sing songs of friendship and health-wishing, for which you can find any number of proposals in the book "Selection of the Most Excellent Songs of Friendship" published by the same publisher.

In order to play any conceivable card game played with ordinary German and French playing cards with these 36 figure cards for further entertainment, the German and French card pictures have been included at the top of the cards. It is only sometimes necessary to leave the Sixes and the Sevens out of the game. Also, this makes it very easy to learn to compare the German and French cards.

With these same cards it is also possible to play an entertaining game of oracles by shuffling the 36 cards and then letting the person, for whom the oracle is meant, cut the cards, then laying out the cards in 5 rows with 4 rows at 8 cards each and the 5th row with the remaining 4 cards. If the person querying is a woman, one starts from sheet 29, spinning a jocular tale from the cards nearby around the figures on display. If it is for a man, the tale is started from sheet 28 and again makes use of the cards surrounding this one. This will bring much entertainment to any merry company.

[Here ends the translation].

Conclusion

We hope that for those interested in the origins of the Lenormand deck, this translation provides useful information. We would ask you not to reproduce this in whole elsewhere as this translation remains copyright to ourselves. Our understanding is that under fair usage you are able to quote and discuss small extracts for purpose of review.

If you would like to share this information, please provide a link to www.newlenormand.com where this PDF is made available. If you have read this from another source, it has unfortunately been illegally copied.

Our book on the Lenormand cards will be published in early 2013 by Llewellyn Worldwide, containing this and other original research, with lessons on reading the cards, building on European cartomantic tradition.

Marcus Katz & Tali Goodwin, with Steph Myriel Es-Tragon.