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The noble game of the Florentine Minchiate



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Regeln des Minchiatta-Spiels

Dresden, 1798, Waltherischen Hofbuchhandlung
and

General Rules of the Noble Game of Minchiate

Rome , 1773, Capponi and Bartolomicchi

We thank **Stephen Schreiber** for providing his English translation of the German text and **John McLeod** for allowing the publication in this manual of the diagram on page 10.

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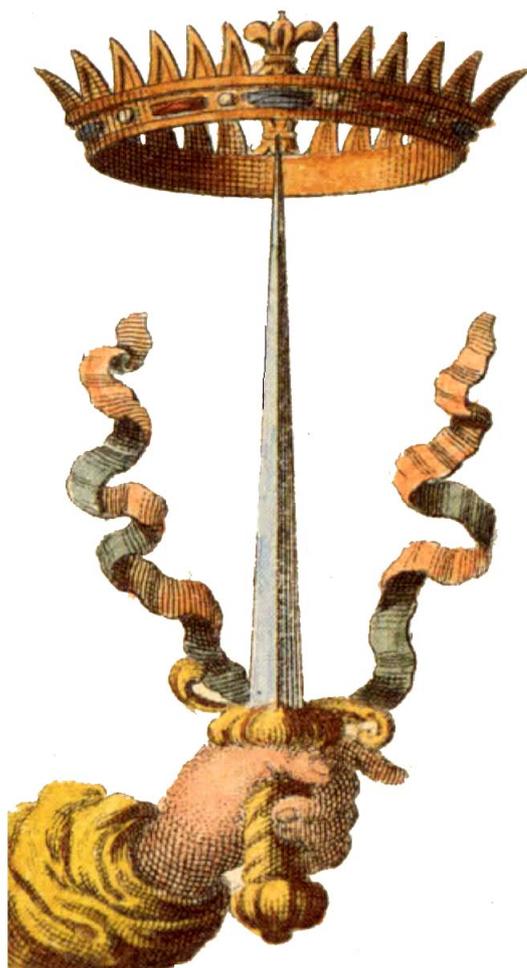
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Brief historical introduction

Stated extremely concisely, the Minchiate are nothing more than a Florentine expansion of the tarot deck. But what does a tarot deck consist of? Unfortunately, these cards are now perceived by most as one of the many gadgets used by charlatans - in squares, more or less luxury apartments and TV studios - to cheat the clerk on duty. But it is a use - the *divinatory* - introduced only in the eighteenth century, by certain people with considerable imagination but probably without any knowledge of the true history of these cards. So let's see here to summarize it very briefly.



Probably born in China, around the tenth century AD, playing cards arrive in the Mediterranean basin thanks to the Arabs. The first testimonies in Spain date back to the beginning of the 15th century, while those in Italy are not very recent; from here they will soon spread throughout Europe. Characterized by great preciousness and refinement, these first cards are produced by skilled artisans (or better artists) who use rare and precious materials and consequently have a limited circulation, limited to court environments only. Since these are unique objects, each deck has its own characteristics, with the most varied seeds and figures. Only later, thanks to the use in their print production, the papers reach a wide diffusion, affirming itself also in the popular environments.

This is how the figures and the seeds that characterize the standard regional decks, still in use today, are born. And if in France, especially for a greater simplicity of printing, monochromatic seeds are introduced with very stylized forms (the now universal spades, hearts, pictures and flowers); in Spain and in Italy, even with a very wide range of regional variations, the seeds of the Arab tradition are adopted: money, cups, swords and sticks (it is interesting to note that in this last case the original Arabian seed was actually a polo club).

In the mid-fifteenth century, in the courts of the Po valley, probably in Milan or Ferrara, among the many other decks to which we have mentioned, one of 78 cards is born. Alongside the classic four Italian suits consisting of 14 cards - ten numerals and four figures: Fante, Cavallo, Regina and Re - the deck features 22 cards called *triumphs*. The triumphs are characterized by a graphic structure quite different from that of the other cards. In fact, they represent a broad and apparently quite random series of subjects that differ from figures of medieval society - the madman, the bagatto (paper that probably represents a craftsman at work, perhaps a cobbler), the pope, the emperor, .. - to allegories related to the philosophical and religious culture of the time. In all the games in which they are used, the triumphs play the role of permanent trumps. From the sixteenth century the name triumphs, which perhaps derives from a poem by Francesco Petrarca, was gradually replaced by *tarot*, a word with which they are now known among the players (note *en passant* that even the term *arcani* is eighteenth century and only in scope divination).

The games played with the tarot deck were relatively complex and did not lend themselves to betting or gambling. Moreover, these new papers were not easy to read, requiring a not indifferent iconographic culture. Considering, finally, that this deck was obviously more expensive than 40, 52 or 56 cards, it is not surprising that the tarot cards did not immediately spread to the popular classes, although they soon became widespread in all the courts and intellectual circles of Europe continental.

In Italy, the game of tarot has virtually disappeared today, surviving - in forms and with very different decks - only in Piedmont, around Bologna and in some Sicilian locations; on the contrary in Europe it is still widely practiced, especially in the central-eastern area and in France. In all these countries the terminology of the game is of clear Italian origin: it is therefore paradoxical that this game has become a stranger right in his homeland.



Returning now to the Minchiate, these are none other than the particular tarot deck born in Florence in the early sixteenth century¹ where the triumphs, instead of twenty-two, are forty (in addition to the unique feature of representing the Horses as Centauri). The game was initially known by the name of *Germini*, probably derived from the word Gemini (Gemini), the highest of the tarots characteristic of only the deck of minchiate. From the end of the 16th century, Germini joined Minchiate who became the name by which the game was later indicated throughout central Italy. It is interesting to note that, according to Dummett [D1], this name derives from the verb "sminchiare", used in Bologna by tarot players with the meaning of playing a high tarot; therefore it seems that the name has no relation to obscene terms.

¹ Actually the first written testimony of the term Minchiate dates back to 1466: Luigi Pulci writes to the seventeen-year-old Lorenzo il Magnifico: Well, if I had a horse, I really want to see you again that I would cost you to steal from the minchiate, to passadays, to arrogance, as you know that I concio [I would come there to get rid of the minchiate, dice, backgammon]. The letter, reported by Franco Pratesi who found it in a text of 1868, is now unobtainable. The second testimony is instead of May 20, 1471. In Cortona a sentence reports a "serious" crime in 1470: "Bartolomeo di Giovanni di Vaglia de Mugello ... maximally giuchava to the minchiate of the month july july and august and many times". However, it is believed that in both these testimonies the term minchiate refers generically to card games. At the beginning of its history our deck of cards and the related game were in fact indicated by the term Germini and only later, starting from the late 1600s, would have become famous as the deck and the game of Florentine minchiate.

The rules of the game

1. The deck of cards²

As we said, the deck of *Minchiate* consists of 97 cards. In addition to the traditional four Italian seeds - *Cups, Coins, Swords* and *Sticks* - consisting of fourteen cards each, the *Minchiate* then have forty *tarot cards*. The ninety-seventh card - the *Fool* - is not a tarot, but plays a special role that will be described later.

The seeds of cups and deniers are called *red seeds*, swords and sticks *long* or sometimes *black*. In all the seeds the highest value card is the King followed by the Queen, the Horse and then the Jack. The figures then follow the number cards that in the long seeds go from 10, to 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 to finish with the lowest card, the Ace; in red seeds their value is inverted so that the highest value numeral card is the Ace followed by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, which in these two suits is therefore the card lower.

In the red seeds the "infantrymen" are female and are called *jockeys*; the Ace of Denari is instead called *Sole di Campagna*. Both the jockeys and the Campaign Sun, despite the proper name, have no special value. The four Kings are in fact the only cards of ordinary seeds to possess a value.

The forty **Tarots** are:

- 1 or the *Pope One* or *Papino*;
- 2 or the *Pope Two* or *Grand Duke*;
- 3 or the *Pope Three* or *Emperor*;
- 4 or the *Pope Four* or *Empress*;
- 5 or the *Pope Cinque* or *in love*;
- 6 or the *Temperance*;
- 7 that is the *Force*;
- 8 that is *Justice*;
- 9 or the *Wheel of Fortune*;
- 10 or the *Cart*;
- 11 that is the *Hunchback* or the *Time*;
- 12 or the *Hangman*;
- 13 that is *Death*;
- 14 that is the *Devil*;
- 15 or the *Casa del Diavolo*;
- 16 or *Hope*;
- 17 or *Prudence*;
- 18 or the *Faith*;
- 19 that is *Charity*;
- 20 that is the *Fire*;
- 21 that is *Water*;
- 22 that is the *Earth*;
- 23 that is the *Air*;
- 24 that is the *Libra*;
- 25 that is the *Virgin*;



² We are familiar with the following modern editions:

Edition of the Solleone by Vito Arienti, Lissone (Milan), 1980;
Meneghello, Milan, 1990;

Antiche Minchiate Etruria reprinted by Lo Scarabeo, Turin, 1996;

The Minchiate Tarot: The 97-card Tarot of the Renaissance by Brian Williams.

Please let us know if you know other editions.

26 that is the *Scorpio*;
 27 that is the *Aries*;
 28 that is *Capricorn*;
 29 or the *Sagittarius*;
 30 that is *Cancer*;
 31 that is *Pisces*;
 32 that is the *Aquarium*;
 33 that is the *Lion*;
 34 that is the *Taurus*;
 35 that is the *Gemini* or the *Meat*;
 [36] the *Star*;
 [37] the *Moon*;
 [38] the *Sun*;
 [39] the *World*;
 [40] the *Trumpet* or the *Judgment* (universal).

The tarots from 1 to 5 are called *Popes* and those from 6 to 9 *Tarocchini* or *Papetti*. The tarots from 10 to 19 are called *Sottoventi*, those from 20 to 29 *Sopraventi* and those from 30 to 35 *Sopratrenta*. The five highest tarots, which are usually not numbered, are finally called *Arias*. The tarots from 16 to 19, representing Prudence and the three theological virtues, are sometimes referred to as *Preghe*.

2. Cards of Account

The *cardscards of account* - that is the cards that have a certain value - are:

- the four Kings,
- the five Popes,
- the 10th, the 13th, the 20th, the 28th and all the tarot cards from the 30th to the Trumpet (40).

In particular, their value is as follows:

3 Points the Popes from Two to Five;
5 Points the four Kings, the Mad, the Pope One, the 10 (Chariot), the 13 (Death), the 20 (Fire), the 28 (Capricorn) and all the *sopratrenta* (Cancer, Pisces, Aquarius, Leo, Taurus and Gemelli);
10 Points: the five *Arias* (Star, Moon, Sun, World and Trumpet).

All other tarot and *cartiglie* (the fifty-two cards of four different kings from ordinary seeds) have no³value.

10 points are then attributed to the pair that wins the last hand.



³ Except at the end of the game, make the 14 bunches, as described in paragraph 12

3. The Versicole

A *versicola* is a combination of cards that is given a particular value similar to *honors* in Whist, *matador* ne L'Hombre and *Neapolitans* in the Tresette. There are two different types of *versicole*: regular and irregular.

The **regular versicole** are made up of three or more *cards of increasing value*:

1, 2, 3 or 1, 2, 3, 4 or 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 2, 3, 4 or 2, 3, 4, 5 or finally 3, 4, 5; all the tarot from the 28th to the Trumpet; for example 28, 29, 30 or 28, 29, 30, 31 or 29, 30, 31 or Star, Moon, Sun, World and Trumpet. We reiterate that three or more account cards are required.

The 29 is not an account card, but appears as a component of the, joining the 28 to the *versicola sopratrenta*.

There are then four different types of **irregular**:

- Pope One, Matto and Trumpet is called the *Versicola del Matto* because it is the only one in which the Fool appears;
- Pope one, 13 and 28 is called the *Versicola of the Thirteen*;
- 10, 20, 30 and Trumpet (40) is called the *Versicola delle Diecine*; if the 10 or the Trumpet is missing the versicle is always valid but is called "shameful diecine", because they are ashamed ... not to be complete;
- finally, three or four kings compose a *versicola of kings*.

In some variations of Minchiate, a versicola 14, 35 and Mondo, called "Demonio, Mondo e Carne" is considered valid, as the 35 represents the Gemini as nude figures: the "Meat" in fact.

Only in the calculation of the score of the versicole, and not as a separate card, 29 is worth 5 points.

The Fool can be added (and then counted for 5 points) in each versicola, regular or irregular, but can not be used to replace any card.

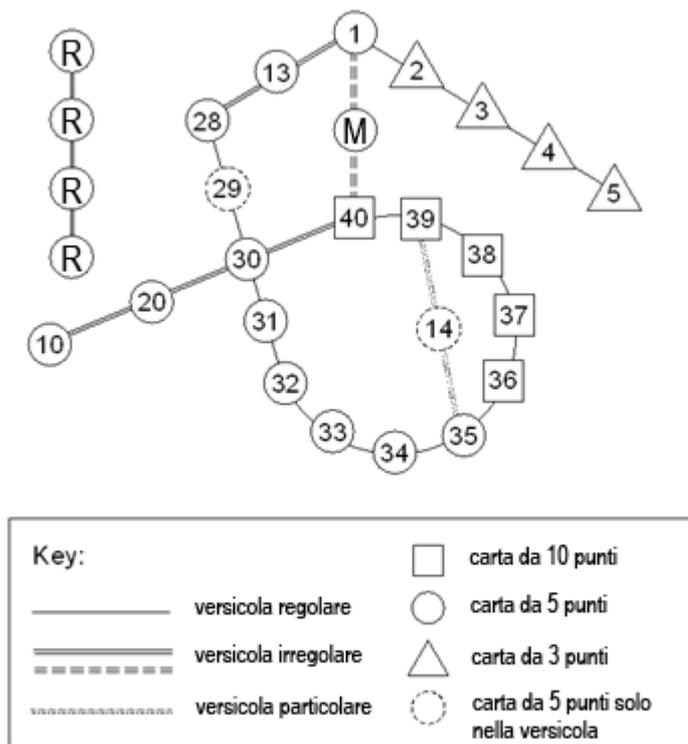
The value of any versicle is calculated by adding the value of all the cards that compose it; for example:

- the versicle consisting of 1, 2 and 3 is worth 11 points because Pope One is 5 while the other two are worth three points each;
- One, Crazy and Trumpet is worth 20 points because the Trumpet is worth 10 while One and Crazy are worth five points each;
- 1, 13 and 28 is worth 15 points;
- aof three *versiclesopratrenta* is worth fifteen points.
- 1.13.28 with 28.29 and 30 are worth 30 points; if you also have the Fool, add the 5 points to both the versicole, reaching 40

If you have a *versicola* and during the game capture a card that lengthens it, the card realizes an *increase* in the value of the versicola.



The following diagram⁴ shows the versicole and the value of each card:



:

4. Cards *Jealous*

The cards *jealous* are particularly important cards that must be played very carefully:

- One of the Pope, the lowest of the tarot cards, can be easily captured and figure in realization of many versicole;
- Pope Tre, also easily captured, as a "middle" pope is essential for the realization of all the *popes'* versicole;
- the 13, essential for the *thirteenth versicola*;
- 20, still relatively small but indispensable for the *tens of versicola*
- 30, used in both versicole of *sopratrenta* that of *tens*
- the Sun, which is necessary for the *Versicola of Arie*.
- 33, at the center of the *sopratrenta versicola*

In practice, any card necessary for the formation of a versicola is considered *jealous*. Usually these cards are then played only when you are last in hand, starting with the lowest, those that are easier to capture. For this reason, Pope One is often one of the first cards to be played.

5. Concerning the *twentynine*

29, special attention must be paid. In fact, even if it does not belong to the *account cards* and therefore does not have its own specific value, it differs from the other *accounts* as it can contribute to the formation of various *versicole* (for example 28, 29, 30) within which five points are worth.

⁴ Tratto da Michael Dummet, John McLeod; *A History of Games Played with the Tarot Pack: The Game of Triumphs*; Mellen Press; 2004. Si ringrazia John McLeod (john@pagat.com) per averne permesso la pubblicazione in questo testo.

Naturally, if one of the two couples has already captured on the 28th and 31st and the other on the 30th, the 29th must no longer be considered as an important card since it can no longer contribute to forming a *versicle* and, as already mentioned, it has no value in itself.

If the *versicola* 14, 35 and *Mondo* are also considered, the above is also valid for 14.



6. About the Fool

Il Matto (also called the "*Sorry*" because it was traditional to ask "excuse" when playing it) is a card which belongs neither to an ordinary seed nor to tarot. Although he never wins, he can be played at any time except at the last hand, when he loses all privileges and is captured by whoever wins the hand.

After being played, if the hand is won by the opposing pair the Fool is replaced by one of the worthless cards already captured by the pair that played it. If this has not yet taken any hold or has only taken account cards, the Fool is kept uncovered on the table and replaced as soon as possible. If then, throughout the game, the couple only capture account cards, the Fool must be replaced by the minimum card.

The Fool can therefore never be lost except in the unlikely event that the pair of the player who owns it does not even make a trick or forget to play it before the last hand (and the opponents will then score the 5 immediate points plus 5 more for *death* - so rare as to be penalized! - of the Fool).

7. The formation of pairs

The *Minchiate* are played in four. Before starting each player takes a card from the deck: the one who has drawn the highest card becomes the dealer and will have as a companion the one who has drawn the second highest card that then goes to sit in front of him. The other two will play together as opponents of the dealer and his partner.

The distribution of cards is called "making the *fole*", meaning with this word the heel (well) of the cards. After each game the cards turn counterclockwise so that the new *fole* will be made by the player to the right of the dealer. Four games are called a *round*; at the end of the first lap the pairs of teammates then change and the player who had drawn the third highest card will play with the first dealer. Note that the latter does not change place but are the others to move. On the third *lap* the dealer's partner will be the player who has drawn the lowest card. After three laps the game ends and, if desired, four cards are drawn again to determine the new pairs.

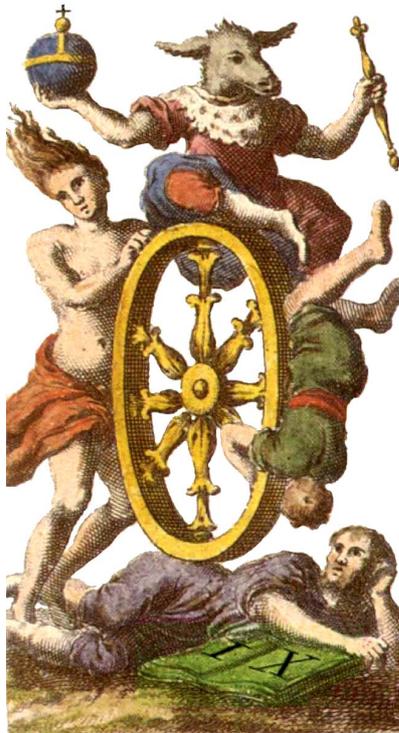
If two players draw two cards with the same value, they must draw two new cards. Even the Fool is not considered a valid extraction and must be carried out again.

If, due to lack of time, it is not possible to finish a *lap*, two are paid *remains* for the *fole*.

8. Distribution of cards

The dealer scribbles the cards ending only after verifying that there is a card at the bottom of the deck. He then passes the deck to the player on his left who, after cutting, checks whether he has found an *account card* or a *survivor-sopraventi*. If this is the case, he *steals it* with the following ones until he finds a scroll. The value of the stolen cards is immediately marked to his advantage. The player can in any case look at the first thirteen cards, counting among them also those he has taken. The remaining cards are then returned to the dealer who puts them under the rest of the deck.

The dealer now distributes the cards as follows: first ten cards each starting from the player sitting to his right, then another ten each and finally a last card face up to the other three players. If these uncovered cards are *account cards*, their value is immediately scored (we will see later how). The dealer now counts the heel of the remaining cards which, unless errors, consists of thirteen cards minus cards *stolen*.



In the unlikely event that more than thirteen cards have been stolen, the dealer will initially have less than twenty-one cards, waiting for the "thief" to discard his excess cards. Otherwise he discovers his twenty-first card, marking its eventual value. The papers that are advanced are now called the *story*; From this the dealer discovers the first card and, if it is an *account card* or a *survivor-sopraventi*, he places it on the table immediately marking its value to its advantage. The dealer then continues to discover one card at a time until he finds *account cards* or *survivors-sopraventi*, immediately marking their value. As soon as he finds a different card, the dealer puts it back into the story that then looks all but without showing it to the opponents. From the fole then takes all the account cards (but not the *surviving-sopraventi*) by putting them face up before him and without marking the value. We refer to this part of the game with the term "take". At this point he then passes to his companion the rest of the *story*, he looks at it and communicates to the opponents the number of cards of each suit (for example: two cups, two sticks, a swords, zero money) omitting to communicate the number of tarot .

Warning: If you have *stolen* or *stand upon* some papers, it must be discarded as many. These cards are placed face down on the table in front of the player until the first card is played.

Finally, each player should now have twenty-one cards and the one who sits to the right of the dealer can play his first card.

9. Still on the *fole*

La *fole*, as we will see in the next paragraph, remains on the table to the right of the dealer. He can consult it at any time while each player has the right to ask him what it contains. The *fole* is communicated in the manner already described, always mentioning the seeds in descending order or starting always from the most numerous. If two or more seeds have the same number of cards, they are said *by lot*; for example: four *cups* and one *by fort* means that *money*, *swords* and *sticks* have one card each. cards *Fola* can also be grouped in *reds* and *longs*; for example: four *red*, one *long* indicates four of *cups*, four of *money*, one of *swords* and one of *sticks*. Finally, if the four suits have a number of cards in increasing order, one can for example simply announce "*money, swords, cups, sticks*" meaning that there is only one piece of *money*, two of *swords*, three of *cups* and four of *sticks*.

10. The game

The cards are played counterclockwise, starting with the player seated to the right of the dealer.

First hand and statement of the versicole:

Immediately after playing their first card, players who own one or more *versicole* they must show them to be able to mark their value. As soon as the first coat is collected, it is no longer possible to mark other versicole.

Scrap:

At the end of the first hand, the cards previously discarded (because of the *stolen* or *taken*) must be shown. The dealer's mate must announce them aloud, specifying who has discarded them and placing them in the *story*. Then he communicates the *again story* in the manner described above and passes it to the dealer who places it on the table, to his right.

Take a hand:

As long as you can, **you must respond to each suit**, including tarot; in case you do not have cards of the played suit it is necessary to play a tarot (but it is not obligatory to *surtaglia*, that is to exceed the previous tarot). **In case a seed is played for the first time and cut with a tarot, a subsequent player who has the king is obliged to play it**, and is a peculiar rule of the Minchiate. On the second lap he can play a lower card or the Fool.

As in many games, the highest card wins the hand. The player who played it collects the cards, joins those of his team (which are then kept together) and plays the first card of the next hand.

Every time an *account card* is taken by the opposing pair, this immediately marks the value. It is said that he *dies* a 3, a 5 or a 10 respectively based on the value of the card. The loss of an *account card* is therefore a triple loss: in fact, the value will not be scored at the end, a value that will be scored by the opponents, who will immediately mark an extra bonus for the card that *dies*. If a card is captured by the partner, it is said that he *dies at home* and is not worth as extra.

Cascia:

If a player has no more tarot cards, it is said that he *falls* and can discover all the remaining cards; from now on he will not play anymore (like the *dead man* in the Bridge), but he will be the winner of every single hand to choose the card he has to play in the next, obviously respecting the obligation to answer the seed, if possible, otherwise playing a card any, not having, in fact, more tarot.

As it is easy to understand, this is a choice not to be made if you still have Kings or the Fool.



It is important to remember that players can at any time look at all the cards taken by the pair they belong to.

The score of 11.

Mazzetti

At the end of each of the four games that form a *round*, the score is calculated as follows:

Each pair meets sockets made and placed under each *card account* two without value cards (*cartiglie*, *Tarocchini* or *sopraventi*) creating so many *bunches* of three cards each;

Starting from the fourteenth *bunch*, all the cards, even those without value, are worth one point. For example, suppose a pair has taken 64 cards, 17 of which are *account cards*. Since the first 14 *bets* (of the 17 facts) contain $14 \times 3 = 42$ cards, the pair earns $64 - 42 = 22$ points;

After these points are then calculated those of the *verses*; remember that the couple who took the nut adds value to all the verses made;

Ultima

The couple who made the last trick will add for this ten points;

Cards of Account

Then there are count *cards*, including *Matto*, usually starting with Popes and Kings;

The points scored during the game are added to this result and the difference between the scores achieved by the two pairs is calculated.

60 points of difference are a *rest*. A balance is paid immediately based on what was agreed before the start of the game. At the end of the game even a single point makes a remainder so 61 to 120 points are worth two *remains*, from 121 to 180 three and so on.

In the highly unlikely event that a couple does not even make a grip, the loss is doubled and the score of the game is fixed at $2 \times 7 = 14$ *remains* over the score already made that is also doubled. The *remains* previously made and paid are not doubled.

It is possible, however improbable, to make more than 700 points (or 12 remains) in one hand.

As examples, consider that:

If at the end of the hand a couple has all three *verses* that require Pope One - ie one / *Matto* / *Trumpet*, one / thirteen / twenty eight and the five Popes - the score is the so-called 74 of one (where Popes 2, 3, 4, 5 are all already counted as *verses* and even by themselves). In fact one / *Matto* / *Trumpet* are worth 20, one / thirteen / twenty-eight with the Fool are another 20 points, the four Minor Popes counted twice make another 24 points plus *one* and *Matto* still 10 points for a total of 74 points.

If one / *Crazy* / *Trumpet* or one / thirteen / twenty-eight is missing, we have 54 one. If instead only Pope 5 is missing, we have 68 of the one. On the other hand, if Popes 5 and 4 are missing, we have 62 of one. Finally, if all the popes' verses are missing, we have 40 of one.

If at the end of the hand both couples have taken two Kings or two Popes, not making any verses, no couple counts their own and they say "without kings" or "without popes" (in this case the Pope One is naturally excluded). If both couples have taken two Kings and two Popes they say "without these, without those".

At the end of this manual we will show an example to clarify what is said here.

12. How to score the score

Each pair has five "fish" and five tokens or coins with which the score obtained during the game is scored. A token (○) is worth one point, a fish (🐟) ten while two tokens placed one on the other (⊙) indicate five points. The tokens placed to the left of a fish must be added to the score while those placed to the right of a fish must be subtracted as shown in the following examples:

○ ○ ○	indicates 7 points
🐟 ○ ○	8 points (you can also score with: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○)
○ ○ ○ ○ 🐟 🐟 🐟	34 points
🐟 🐟 🐟 🐟 🐟 ○ ○	48 points
○ ○ 🐟 🐟	26 points

Attention: as already mentioned, the pairs do not score the score actually achieved but only the difference with that of the opponents. In particular, the lower score is subtracted from the major and only the difference is scored. If, for example, pair A scored 15 points and now pair B scores 32 points, this last one will score only 17 while pair A will score nothing.



13. Errors and their penalties

If the dealer makes a mistake in the distribution of the cards, the error can be corrected as long as the other players have not taken the cards and the twenty-first has not yet been distributed. Otherwise a penalty of 10 points is applied plus 10 points per card which are scored to the advantage of the dealer's opponents. After that, before the dealer can *discover* or *take*, a player who has fewer cards than expected takes from the *story* the missing cards without looking at them or showing them. On the contrary, a player who has received too many cards can discard those in excess but can not in this way become a *fallio* (remain uncovered in a suit).

Forgotten cards (for example in a corner or under the table) are part of the *story*, regardless of whether or not they are account cards; in this case there are no penalties. If in the *story* there are too many cards, the excess cards are taken by the dealer.

If a player has too many - or too few - cards and only realizes this during the game, he and his partner can only score the cards and the *last one* besides what was marked during the game.

If it is not answered by seed or is not cut with a tarot, when the error is detected the player must pay two *remains* to each of the opposing players but the hand remains valid and is not replayed. This is the only case in which the partner of the player who commits the error can be advantaged by the error itself.

Briefing of strategy

1. The game of papercards

First of all, we usually try to get rid of our *cards* and help the comrade to get rid of hisso that, as long as you have *cards* and under special circumstances, it is quite rare to play a *tarot*.

When a seed is played in which a player has a *faltery* natural- called a *first*- it is correct to play his most important card and also the *second* time that seed is played a *tarot* highcould be the right answer. Instead on the *third one* should usually be put only a Pope or 29 especially if the seed was played by an opponent or many of his cards are found in the *story*.

If my partner plays a seed covered by the player on my left, I can safely cut with the *tarot* lowestbecause my partner knows the distribution of the suit cards and also knows which are possessed by the opponent on my right. This explains the importance of counting all the *cards*, including those found in the *story*, in order not to deceive one's partner.

Of course, the easiest way to "take home" their *account cards* is to count the remaining cards of a suit and play it as soon as the partner has a *faltery* while we know that the opponent who follows him still has cards of that suit. .

When you then remain the only one to still have cards of that seed we must no longer play it but rather lower a *tarot* lowor another seed to make it clear to the partner that the seed is no longer safe.

If you have a lot of cards from a seed then it is advisable to play it once and then always change seed in order to communicate so that it is not safe to play that seed again.

In the game, the most important thing is to try to stay out of hand to "bring home" their account cards and, when we do not have more, to allow you to do it to your partner. For this reason it is advisable to keep the *tarot* low, even the *Popes* and even the *Pope* as well as the *Fool*, with the *survivors sopraventi* biggest that should be used to win the last hand.

A king *discovered*, *stolen* or *taken* should be taken as soon as possible, in the hope that the opponents have not noticed and are creating a *fallio*. Another card should be placed on the table so as not to make mistakes in the gap and we must show it to opponents if they want to see it.

If some cards have been stolen and the dealer has discovered a king in front of him, he should discard in order to get rid of the cards of the suit (thus creating a *fallio*). In this way it is possible to play a trump when the comrade enters that suit and thus capture the King.

The rejection of four cards of different suits is called the Discard *Trumpet* because it is likely that you have high trumps that you want to keep the as long as possible. It is quite rare that one should discard a *tarot*, in this case it is unlikely that it is an account card.

If the dealer has a king *discovered* (*taken* or got as twenty-first card), opponents should usually play that seed immediately. If



instead you have a king (*discovered* or secret) it is usually better to play a small card of that suit (as we will see later).

2. The Fallium

There are two ways of achieving a *fallio*: discarding or because served "by hand". This last is called *natural fallio*.

If you have only one card from a suit and discard it, it is said that you have "made a *first*". Two discarded cards make a *second* and three a *third*. Making a third is not usually very wise, but can sometimes displace opponents. It is not even wise to make a *falliogotten* in a seed that is rich in *fole* because even the adversaries may already haverid of that seed.

If your cards are not "too" *jealous* and you have six or seven cards of a suit, it is preferable to discard some of these cards rather than to make a *fallio* to avoid to your partner a bad position as it would be forced to play from immediately his trumps.

Since *fouls* are usually made for the purpose of capturing the Kings, if you have three Kings, it is better not to make a fool. Having few tarots is another good reason for not doing *fouls* (unless they are very *jealous*), especially if you have the *arias* highest (Trumpet and World) that must be kept as long as possible.

3. Wrapping

Wrapping means having a king and playing a card of the same suit to avoid being captured (see section 11). This game is usually done when many cards of the same suit are found in the story or are owned by the same player.

When you do not have at least 5 or 6 cards of the king's suit, it is generally not useful to *hang him* because it is difficult to save while at the same time you give the opponent valuable information on his hand. Similarly it is often useless to hang the king if you have many tarot, because in the end we can find ourselves obliged to play the king just when the partner has no tarot.

4. Holding

a *seal* means playing a card to prevent opponents from saving one of their jealous cards. If, for example, the Popes have not yet been played and one of the minor tarots is played, this being *Popeheld*. Similarly it is possible to make a *seal at the thirteen* with a *bracwindproof* or a *seal* with a *survent*. It is not easy to make a *seal at thirty* because this requires a *sopratrenta*; nevertheless, even anis sometimes attempted *estate in the Sun*: in this case, if we play the World, we must also own the Trumpet or be sure that our partner has it.

An *estate to the companion* indicates instead the game of a high tarot to allow the companion to bring home one of his account cards. This must also be done when one of the opponents has *fallen*, or has finished his trumps. In this case the players have to place the other opponent "in the middle" playing high cards (thus making a *seal to the partner*) and thus always having the last word.

An *estate* at the right time is fundamental in the economy of the game.



5. Smoking

The term *smoked* refers to the game of a *tarot* to provide some information to the companion. There are various types of's *smokesmoking*:

Papa (or a small *card of account*): he asks his partner to take the highest tarot and then to continue with the highest tarot until he is able to take.

Fumata of Sopraventi: play a *sopraventi* usually indicates possession of Trumpet or, if the owner of this air is already known, the World and the Sun, and so on. The ~~survivor~~ *sopraventi* must be the first tarot dropped by the player.

Hidden smoke: in the first hand I have to play a tarot and I play the 10th although I have better *cards* . This also indicates that I own the Trumpet.

Naturally a *smoke* should never be given with 29 because the partner is not able to understand its meaning exactly.



The *Thirteen versicle*: Pope

One, Death and Twenty-eight (Capricorn).

6. An example of a fanned example

The following is an example of fazzata so to speak historical, it is drawn from a German manual of the game printed in Dresden in 1798.

We will follow the conventions adopted so far introducing only the symbols of the four seeds instead of their names: **you** will stand for swords, cups, money and sticks in the indication of the cards played, in bold the account cards. Furthermore the sign ➤ will indicate the first hand.

For scoring we use a graph like this:

NS	EW

Where the first line indicates the remains earned and the second points

distribution:

South is the dealer. West raises and discovers first 21, then **33** (*account card*), and EW then scores 5 points; the next card is a 4 of Swords (4 t) and ends the *stealing* of the West.

The situation at the end of the lift can be summarized graphically like this:

NS	EW
	5

Now the first ten cards are given:

	Money	Swords	Cups	Sticks	Tarot
South	R		2	10,9	2, 3, 16, 24, 38 (Sun), 39 (World)
East		8,7,6,5,3,2,1	10	5	40 (Trumpet)
North			8,9	8,7,3,2,1	12, 14, 15
West	D, C, F		3,4, 5		23, 26, 34, 37 (Moon)

The next eleven are the following (**in red the last discovery**):

	Coins	Swords	Cups	Sticks	Tarot
South	1,2,9	D	6,7	C, F	10, 35, 36 (Stella)
East		C, F	F		Matto, 13, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32
North	4		D, C, 1		4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
West	3,5,6,7, 8	10,9	R	6,4	1

As a result of the findings the score will be:

NS	EW
	5
	10
	15

Now it is up to the dealer to watch the Fola (of 11 cards, given the action of West): South discovers the first card of the Fola, 17 and does not mark any point. Then take the only account cards from the fole: King of Swords, King of Clubs and 20.

North announces the composition of the formula: 1 for Denari, Spade and Bastoni.
We now have the following situation in the hands of the players, and in the 8 cards of Fola:

	Money	Swords	Cups	Sticks	Tarot
South	R, 1,2,9	R, D	2,6,7	R, C, F, 10,9	2, 3, 10, 16, 20, 24, 35, 36, 38, 39
East		C, F, 8,7,6,5,3,2,1	F, 10	5	Matto, 13, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 40
North	4		D, C, 1,8,9	8,7,3,2,1	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15
West	D, C, F, 3,5,6,7,8	10,9	R, 3,4,5	6,4	1, 21, 23, 26, 33, 34, 37
FOLA	10	4		D	17, 18, 19, 22, 25

South now discard 3 cards (all 3 of Cups), West two (of Spade), this to be available to cut, and then the final situation of the distribution is:

	Money	Swords	Cups	Sticks	Tarot
South	R, 1,2,9	R, D		R, C, F, 10,9	2, 3, 10, 16, 20, 24, 35, 36, 38, 39
East		C, F, 8,7,6,5,3,2,1	F, 10	5	Mad, 13, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 40
North	4		D, C, 1,8,9	8,7,3,2,1	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15
West	D, C, F, 3,5,6,7,8		R, 3,4,5	6,4	1, 21, 23, 26, 33, 34, 37
FOLA	10	10, 9,4	2,6,7	D	17, 18, 19, 22, 25

After Nord announced the definitive composition of the fole: 3 for Spade and Cups, 1 for sticks and deniers (the number of tarot is never said, but it is deduced by difference: five), East begins the game by attacking with 5 of sticks, trying to drop the King of the South, who had been seen appearing in the cards taken in the story.

Before the others can reply, the verses held are declared:

Est declaresof *versessupervisors*: **28, 29, 30, 31** and **32** plus the **Fool**, for 30 points.

North and West have nothing, while South declares Regi versicle (three) for 15 points.

The situation is therefore as follows:

NS	EW
	15
	45
	30

Let's see the card game:

	North	West	South	East	Notes	NS	EO
1	8 I	6 I	R I	➤ 5 I	The King of Clubs does not fall into the trap of East, since West can answer.		30
2	4 O	7 O	➤ R O	30	Instead the King of Money falls, played by the South without much criterion.		35
3	14	33	R t	➤ 1 t	And <i>dies</i> the King of Swords also, just played by East, who has more luck than in the first hand.		40
4	15	➤ 8 O	2 O	13	<i>Dies</i> on the 13th of East, unlucky		35
5	➤ 9 u	5 u	20	10 u	The King of Cups does not fall.		
6	8	6 O	➤ 9 O	29	East saves 29, useful only for his versicle (alone is worth nothing), having already 30 .		
7	11	37	D t	➤ 3 t			
8	6	➤ 5 O	1 O	32			
9	D u	4 u	36	➤ F u			
10	1 I	4 I	➤ 9 I	28	East takes home on 28 , making at least one versicle with 29 and the 30 .		
11	4	26	35	➤ 2 t	North turns the Pope four to the companion		
12	2 I	1	➤ 10 I	27	West holds the Pope one. East would have perhaps done better to play the 31 to enlarge the versicle		
13	5	23	16	➤ 5 t	South prefers to make the Pope die five who discard an Air		38
14	7	3 O	24	➤ 31	East is made 31		
15	9	21	2	➤ 6 t	The Pope dies two		41
16	12	➤ D O	10	Matto	Sud then makes the 10		
17	➤ 8 u	3 u	3	40	The Pope also falls three		44
18	1 u	34	38	➤ 7 t	Death of 34		39
19	3 I	F O	➤ F I	8 t			
20	7 I	C O	➤ C I	F t			
21	C u	R u	➤ 39	C t	The Cup Kingdies		34

The card game thus concludes with EO leading 34 points; let's move now to the count, we will analyze the game later.

	For NS	p.	For EW	p.
<i>From the previous phases: distribution, declarations and game</i>	Last socket	10	Accumulated score	34
<i>From the number of cards, From the papers of account into the sockets</i>			44 cards then:	2
	King of Cups and Sticks	10	King of Swords and Coins	10
			The Fool	5
	4	3	2, 3, 5	9
	10, 13, 20, 34, 35	25	1, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33	30
	36, 38, 39	30	37, 40	20
<i>Versicles in</i>	the Arias: 34, 35 and Stella (36)	20	of the Fool	20
			of Popes (1,2,3) with the Crazy	16
			of the sopratrenta (28,29,30,31,32,33) with the MATT	35
TOTAL		98		181
			Subtracting the points of NS	98
			WINNING	83
			EQUAL TO REMAINS	2

So EW wins by 2 hands.

Let's analyze the bets now. Through the discussion we will introduce the basic concepts of the game strategy.

In the first hand, as we have mentioned, Est sticks to sticks having seen that South has found the King in the story, with the hope that his partner is "dry", that is without cards in the suit and, therefore, may cut South to lose his King. East is comforted in his decision by two facts: the distribution not regular - "unbalanced" to use the term derived from the bridge - the cards in his possession (2 cups, 9 swords, 1 sticks, no money) is statistically an index of other similar distributions, so it increases the probability of finding West without club cards; moreover, playing the only sticks, it will be available to cut and use its 10 tarot cards. As we have seen, the operation is not crowned with success, having West two club cards.

The second hand, with South first to play, is an example of a gamble.

South plays the King of money despite the unbalanced hand, with four cards in hand and one in Fola, hoping the remaining 9 cards are dealt regularly. Since losing a King - to make him die - is worth at least 10 points for the opponent (5 for death and 5 in the final count) and that the Kings make versicle on their own, it would have been more prudent to defend him by playing a money roll.

Let's clarify the concept of defense: playing money - not the King! - South would prevent another player, opponent, entering the seed first to put his king at the mercy of the rule of cut, the one sought by the East in the first hand. This way of playing, to be kept in mind, is said to "drown" or "hang" the King. If South had followed this principle would have considerably changed the course of the game.

The same pattern of the first hand is retried from the East, with more luck, to the third. Here Est uses two pieces of information: the swords have been rejected as a consequence of the stolen cards and the extreme length of his sword pole. The first information comes from having North announced the composition of the *story before and after* the South and West gap, and it is a somewhat ambiguous

information: it has no way of knowing which of the two has been to discard swords. Holding 9 swords cards in hand, with 3 remaining in the *story*, causes only two cards to remain in play. The other possibility - always tied to the discards - would have been to play cups, with a seed but less known: if he tried - looking at the cards - he would put West at great risk of losing his King.

The first three hands, but also the 5th, are part of a real battle on the Kings, but we keep in mind that - apart from the points obtained "by killing" eventually the opponents' cards - owning 2 Kings each at the end of the game leads to a null profit for both pairs (10 points each, then zero difference), while 3 Kings give rise to 15 points for the cards plus 15 others (which could be 20 if you have the Fool) for the *Versicola dei Regi*, against only 5 of the Kings left to the other couple: 25 points ahead; four Kings then give 40 net points of difference.

Another basic concept in the game strategy is that of "jealous cards". If you look at how the verses can be composed, you can see how certain cards are central, necessary for the construction of the combinations. For example, without the 38 - the Sun - suns can not be made of Arie, since it is necessary both in the lowest (36, 37, 38) and in the highest (38, 39 and 40); possessing such a card is more important than it appears at first sight: it is a card to be jealously controlled both for making verses and for preventing opponents from making it.



Other jealous papers are 20 and even more 30 (both necessary to the verses of the *Diecine*, and the 30 also useful to regular verses), the 28 that enters - as well as in the lower regular verses - also in the verse of the *Thirteen*, 33 placed at the center of the sequence from 31 to 35, the *Pope One* (1) that enters the verses of the *Fool* and the *Thirteen* (as well as being part of those of the *Popes*), and the 3 that is necessary to all the verses of *Popes*.

As a result, playing jealousy cards at the right time and in safety, or tending traps to those of the adversaries, becomes a strategic necessity. Of course you can also save an important card by discarding it on a grip already made by the partner - as in the hand 12 of our example - or playing it hoping in the greater grip power of the opponent compared to our opponent, as in the hand 11.

Compared to other games where is not allowed, the decision to choose which cards to consider important is advantaged by the ability to observe the taken at any time: it is clear that being able to complete the verses is one of the goals of the game, and know which cards we have already captured can make goals "Jealous" also cards other than the standard ones listed above.

There is also a convention - called a *smoked* - to indicate to the companion the possession of the *Trumpet* or, in general, the highest tarocco whose location is not known: this happens by playing one of the *Popes* or *survivors*-*sopraventi* firsthand (from

21 to 27). Another convention *smoking* foresees that the game of 25.26 or 27 means possession of the 2 highest tarot cards, while with 21, 22, 23 or 24 we can note that of three.

Returning to our game, in the fourth hand East makes an evaluation of opportunities, choosing to risk the 13, the account card and part of the only homonymous versicle, rather than pass the 27, which is not a card account. The reasoning is mainly to not reduce to having only cards of account, moreover the 13 is perhaps the least jealous of all accounts (even if East holds the 28, which with the *Pope One* (1) composes precisely the versicle of the *Thirteen*).

However it goes badly to the East, and NS scores 5 points for the death of 13 (*Death ... itself*).

In the fifth, West realizes the risk that could run with his King and holds it in his hand, playing the five instead, while South realizes his 20, the card of account that also cancels the hope of EO to build a versicle of Diecine (they had already taken the 30th and the 40th is inherently impregnable).

In the 6th hand, the choice of East to play the 29, which is not a card, instead of 28, is dictated by the possibility to base on this card a regular versicle having already 30, while the 28 loses attractiveness even to because of the fall of 13 (nothing more versicle than the Thirteen).

The next hand sees East playing swords, owned only by him and from the South last hand, in order to drop tarot cards from the hand of North and - at the same time - free the West account cards to the trick: in case the West 37th replica the same game with money, since - from the sixth hand onwards - it is clear that North has only low tarot: the 32 is brought home, even if - perhaps - it would have been better to be immediately on 31 and ensure the versicle from 29 to 31.

The tenth play sees back on the 28th and extends the tarot verse called before.

In the eleventh North the Pope four rightly plays, putting under "impasse" - to use a bridge term - West: if he puts a low tarot he allows South to have both an account card that the Pope four, otherwise he risks losing also 34. In fact, going out again to swords was not very useful to EO.

In the next hand - the 12th - West commits an ingenuity discarding the Pope one on the grip already assured by the 27 of the companion: it would have been better to take with the 34, which is also worth 5 points, for two reasons: block the versicle of Arias of NS, already set with the 35 and 36 in the previous holds, and give yourself a chance to extend your own based on the 28 and following. The verses of Papi are then however the least advantageous.

In the thirteenth hand South, placed in front of a replica of the 11th game, he prefers to kill the Pope five of his companion, rather than play an Air, in anticipation of the last hands: having more tarots of his opponents, possession of the 38 and 39 allows him to aspire to the 10 points of the last hand.

The last hands are almost automatic, in case there is not to notice the lack of courage of the West in the 17th when, on entry to the Northern Cup, passes the 3 of cups instead of playing the King: the unfolding of the previous game had to have made understand how South did not have all the highest tarot, and the play of East in the previous hand - the Fool - had to be read just as protection of the 40.

If he had played the King - instead of letting him die on the last hand - he would have earned as many as 39 points: (5 for the king itself, 10 for as many points less than NS, 20 for the verses of Regi plus the Fool and 4 for the cards taken); with the score would have reached 122 of difference, equal to 3 remains: one more than those really won!



Books and sites of interest

- [D1] Michael Dummett; *The game of Tarot: from Ferrara to Salt Lake City*; Duckworth; London; 1980
[D2] Michael Dummett; *The world and the angel: the tarots and their history*; Bibliopolis; Naples; 1993
[DM] Michael Dummett, John McLeod; *A History of Games Played with the Tarot Pack: The Game of Triumphs*; Mellen Press; London; 2004

<http://www.tarock.info/Minchiatta.htm> contains the original eighteenth-century *Regeln des Minchiatta Spiels*.

<http://www.tretre.it/menu/accademia-del-tre/storia-dei-giochi-di-carte> contains a large section dedicated to the birth of tarots and Minchiate

<http://l-pollett.tripod.com/cards17i.htm> reports the images of various decks and some historical annotations

<http://www.tarothermit.com/florence.htm> with comparison between three different forms

<http://www.pagat.com> is the site of reference of the games of cards all over the world

<http://ipcs.org/> is the web address of the International Playing-Card Society (IPCS)

<http://germini.altervista.org> The site of the Accademia de 'Germini (at the time of the press , September 2008, the site is evolving)



Translation Notes

The translation is still incomplete, I know. I'll work on it.

- Initial translation by Google Translate.
- Several instances of “survivor” changed to “sopravventi”
- Paper -> card
- Versicle -> versocila (what the hell is a versicle??)
-