



52 chromolithograph playing cards, blue and white pattern to versos.

A HATCHET JOB

Jean Hachette - Jeu à Transformation

Author

F[ROMMANN], M[aximilian]

Publication date

[c1860].

Publisher

M[aximilian] F[rommann],

Publication place

[Darmsdadt],

Physical description

52 chromolithograph playing cards, blue and white pattern to versos.

Dimensions

90 by 65mm (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

Notes

The Maker

Although 'Jean Hachette' cards were published around the same time by the Grimaud firm in Paris and Braun & Schneider in Munich, this original deck was made by Frommann and can be identified by his initials on the Eight of Diamonds, as here. Maximilian Joseph Frommann (1813-1866) was an illustrator and card-maker based in Darmstadt, Germany. After his death, his daughter Anna started

a publishing business with her husband Georg Bunte, under the name Frommann & Bunte, while his son Friedrich formed his own firm with Friedrich Morian, named Frommann & Morian. From 1866 to 1872, the siblings worked together to manage their late father's affairs, and later both went on to publish their own decks of playing cards.

The Cards

Published under the title 'Jeanne l'Hachette', the present deck of cards is loosely centred around the siege of Beauvais, which occurred in 1472. The daughter of a peasant, nicknamed after her weapon of choice, Jeanne l'Hachette defended her city from the troops of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. Jeanne herself is shown on the Queen of Spades, axe in hand. The other court cards show a range of single-figure characters, some from the story and some quite unrelated.

The pip cards are examples of the transformation style that was growing in popularity during the nineteenth century. They are more simplistic than earlier examples, with the suit marks incorporated into the image while still retaining their characteristic shapes. The light-hearted illustrations, which often include a dose of humor, show a stark contrast with the more stiff and formal German cards of the time.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £1200

Inventory reference: 20733