

**Of Boards and Men:
Board Games
Investigated
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collected and edited by Thierry Depaulis

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Three early 17th-century printed games by the Veuve Petit in Paris*

by Thierry Depaulis

In 2009 three early French printed board games were auctioned in Vendôme. They all bore the address of a completely unknown printseller, the Veuve Charles Petit, in the rue Montorgueil in Paris. These three woodcuts shed a new light on the Paris print trade of the early 17th century.

The three games are titled respectively:

- *Le Plaisant & Nouveau jeu de la Chovette* (fig. 1),
- *Le Jeu Royal de Cupidon, autrement appelé le passe-temps d'Amour* (fig. 2),
- *Le ROYAL & Nouveau jeu de la Guerre* (fig. 3).

They are all woodcuts, one (Cupidon) being coloured, and all three have the same imprint: "A Paris, Chez la vefve (Charles) Petit ruë Montorgueil, devant les trois Mores, chez un Espicier". Their titles and their texts, as well as the ornaments which surround the printed rules of the *Jeu de la Chouette* and of the *Jeu de la Guerre*, are actual typeset compositions. Their sizes, 400 x 510/520 mm, are more or less similar, but *Le Jeu Royal de Cupidon* is displayed horizontally (as 'landscape'), while the other two are displayed vertically.

Provenance

These three prints were put at auction, on Tuesday 28 April 2009, in Vendôme.¹ The auction house was selling the library of the 'château de Balthazar', in Le Mesnil-Durand (Calvados), near Caen, a castle which used to belong to the Graindorge d'Orvilles, whose head was styled *seigneur* (then Baron) of Le Mesnil-Durand. Many books dealt with geography.

The three games (nos. 881, 882, 883) were bought at the auction by the Librairie Loeb-Larocque, in Paris, a specialist bookshop dealing in antique travel books and maps; some weeks later they were exhibited at the International Antique Book Fair in Paris (17-19 June 2009). No. 881, the most attractive, found a buyer with a well-known British antique map dealer, Jonathan Potter Antique Maps, in London.² The other two were acquired by the Bibliothèque nationale de France on my recommendation.³

The rue Montorgueil and its printsellers

The rue Montorgueil in Paris (now in the 1st and 2nd arrondissements) was famous for its printshops, that published impressive images in the style of 'imagerie populaire' in the second half of the 16th century (fig. 4 & 5).⁴ Germain Hoyau, Guillaume Saulce, François de Gourmont, Marin Bonemere, Pierre Boussy and the Mathonières are among the main names of the time.

* The author wants to thank Adrian Seville for his careful proofreading.

1 SAS Vendôme-Cheverny-Paris, Philippe Rouillac, auctioneer.

2 It is now, since 2010, in the collection of Adrian Seville, Chislehurst, Kent (UK).

3 Shelfmark is now: BnF, Est., RES AA4 Veuve Petit / boîte format 4.

4 On the prints of the rue Montorgueil, see Jean ADHÉMAR, "La rue Montorgueil et la formation d'un groupe d'imagiers parisiens au XVI^e siècle", *Le Vieux Papier*, no. 167, April 1954, pp. 25-34; Jean ADHÉMAR (ed.), *L'imagerie populaire française*, Milan, 1968, Chap. 3: "Paris, fin XVI^e siècle", pp. 51-4; Nicole GARNIER, "Aux origines de l'imagerie populaire française: la gravure de la rue Montorgueil à Paris au XVI^e siècle", *La Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France*, no. 4, 1989, pp. 225-32; and also the remarkable auction catalogue, by Bernard PORTHEAULT and Achille-Jean GILLIARD, *Images parisiennes du XVI^e siècle, rue de Montorgueil*, Chartres, 17 October 2004.



Fig. 1: *Le Plaisant & Nouveau jeu de la Chovette*, Paris, Veuve (Charles) Petit, rue Montorgueil, ca 1640. 400 x 510 mm.



Fig. 2: *Le jeu Royal de Cupidon, autrement appelé le passe-temps d'Amour*, Paris, Veuve (Charles) Petit, rue Montorgueil, ca 1640. 510 x 400 mm.

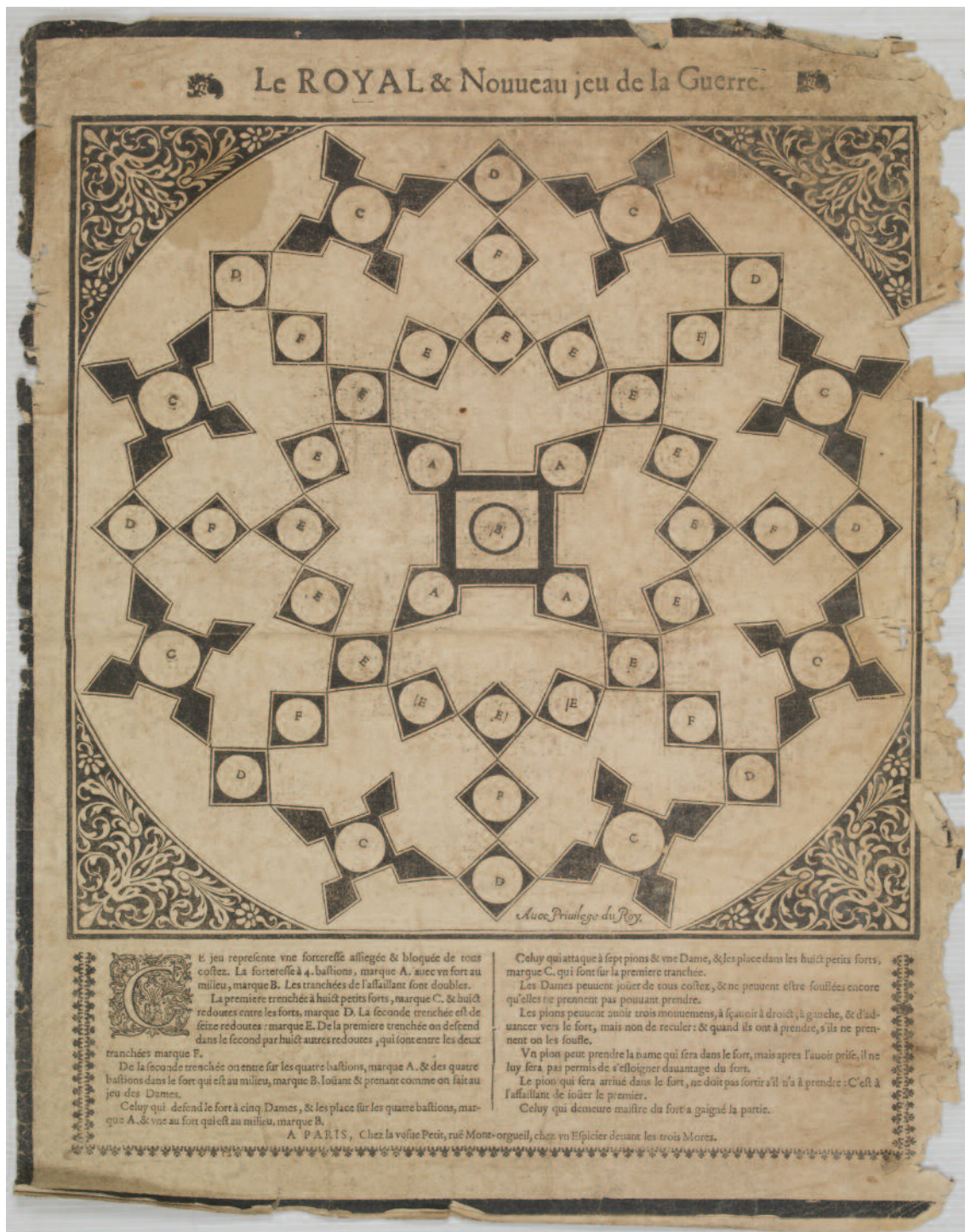


Fig. 3: Le ROYAL & Nouveau jeu de la Guerre, Paris, Veuve (Charles) Petit, rue Montorgueil, ca 1640. 400 x 520 mm.



Fig. 4: Image from the rue Montorgueil: *La capture de Jérusalem par Nabuchodonosor*,
“A Paris, chez Charles le Vigoureux, rue Montorgueil, à l'image St Pierre”.



Fig. 5: Image from the rue Montorgueil: *Comment le bon Pere ayant faict tuer le veau gras, faict un festin à ses amys* (The Return of the Prodigal Son,
“A Paris, par François Desprez, rue Montorgueil, au Bon Pasteur”.

It is commonly assumed that this woodcut production died out under the reign of Henri IV (1589-1610) and that, after the turn of the century, with a change in taste, woodblock printing was replaced by intaglio, and the former printsellers were replaced by new-comers now settling on the other bank of the River Seine.

The classic work on French popular prints, edited by Jean Adhémar and published in 1968, writes: “Mathonière died in 1598, as well as Gourmont, and this was the end of this Parisian ‘popular’ print school; in the beginning of the 17th century we find very different broadside printers in the rue St Jean de Latran and the rue St Jacques.”⁵ A little further, in the introduction to Chapter 5, “L’imagerie parisienne au XVIIe siècle”, the author adds: “Now, woodblock printing was abandoned for intaglio printing.”⁶ It is therefore quite understandable why it was at first supposed, on the evidence of the address, that these three games could date back to before 1600.

Charles Petit, picture maker in the rue Montorgueil

The name of Charles Petit was up to that time unknown.⁷ No print by him or his widow was known to exist. But the carefulness of the keepers of the Réserve des Estampes at the Bibliothèque nationale de France had unearthed enough data to set up a short index card. It soon was discovered that Charles Petit died in 1636.⁸ Thus these woodcuts were much later than previously thought.

With some further personal researches and the help of a recently published book by the Archives nationales, Charles Petit’s career can be broadly sketched. In 1607, in a notarised act, Charles Petit is styled “imager et imprimeur d’histoires, demeurant rue Montorgueil”, aged 25.⁹ The word *imager* or *imagier* can be translated as ‘picture maker’, *histoires* is to be understood as ‘illustrated (engraved) stories’, so an *imprimeur d’histoires* is a ‘picture printer’, therefore a printseller.¹⁰

He was therefore born around 1582. Two days later, on 29 April 1607, he signed his marriage contract with Jeanne Cuvillier, the daughter of a master vinegar maker. Among the witnesses we find Charles Petit’s uncle Nicolas Prové, “marchand imager”, Marguerite Crucquet, the widow of Charles Vigoureux, also “imager”, and Jean Boussy, “maître imager, son ami”.¹¹

Some more information can be drawn from various sources. Charles Petit appears as the godfather of Jean Boussy’s son in 1611,¹² and of two other children in 1614 and 1624. In 1623 he stands as character reference for Marie Chesneau, five, who lost her father and mother a few months ago.¹³ Charles Petit’s death is recorded on 4 August 1636. He was buried in Saint-Eustache cemetery, just near the rue Montorgueil. On 4 September 1631, in the presence of a notary, he had signed an act of mutual settlement with his wife, Jeanne Cuvillier.¹⁴

But let us come back to the recently published notarised act of 27 April 1607. There we learn that Charles Petit became the heir for one half, through his mother Marie Vigoureux, of his maternal

5 ADHÉMAR (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 51 (my translation).

6 ADHÉMAR (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 67. The same views are expressed in GARNIER, *loc. cit.*, who writes, p. 231: “L’imagerie de la rue Montorgueil disparaît vers 1600-1620, devant la concurrence des tailles-douces produites rue Saint-Jacques, aux abords de l’Université.”

7 He is not mentioned in the most updated dictionary of early Parisian printsellers, Maxime PRÉAUD *et al.*, *Dictionnaire des éditeurs d’estampes à Paris avant 1800*, Paris, 1987.

8 All my thanks to Maxime Préaud, who was then the head of the Réserve des Estampes, for generously sharing with me these prime data.

9 M.-A. FLEURY, Martine CONSTANS, *Archives nationales, Documents du Minutier central des notaires de Paris: peintres, sculpteurs et graveurs au XVIIe siècle (1600-1650)*, vol. II, Paris, 2010, no. 1674.

10 On the words *imagier*, *imager*, etc., see Thierry DEPAULIS, “Vous avez dit imagier?”, *Le Vieux Papier*, no. 361, July 2001, pp. 105-9.

11 FLEURY & CONSTANS, *op. cit.*, no. 1675.

12 PRÉAUD *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

13 M.-A. FLEURY, *Archives nationales, Documents du Minutier central concernant les peintres, les sculpteurs et les graveurs au XVIIe siècle (1600-1650)*, vol. I, Paris, 1969, p. 133.

14 Card index of the Réserve des Estampes.

grandmother Marie Desfreux, widow of Guillaume Saulce.¹⁵ The latter was also an “imprimeur d’histoires”, in business between 1560 (?) and 1582, when he died.¹⁶ In 1569 he married, maybe as a second wedding, Marie Desfreux (or Deffonz or De Frue...),¹⁷ herself the widow of one Guillaume Vigoureux, bushel maker.

Thus we see that Charles Petit was the grandson of Guillaume Saulce, an important printseller of the time. The 1607 act also says he has inherited the “planches et meubles, d’après les inventaires de Marie Desfreux du 29 septembre 1594”. It is tempting to understand these planches as the engraved plates his grandfather printed with. Lastly we discover that Nicolas Prové,¹⁸ “imager et imprimeur d’histoires”, was his tutor, for Charles Petit had just reached his majority.

I must add that Marie Vigoureux’s brother – therefore Charles Petit’s maternal uncle – was Charles Vigoureux, “imager en papier peintre en histoires”, rue Montorgueil, cited since 1582, who died on 1st December 1605 (see one of his prints fig. 4), and that their “sister Jeanne [Vigoureux] had married Jean Boussy, ‘imager en papier’, before 1594, then, before 1605, Nicolas Prové, also ‘imager’”.¹⁹ So these families were intimately related.

Nothing, however, tells us what Charles Petit’s production was like, but we now know that it lasted after his death, since obviously his widow, Jeanne Cuvillier, inherited the business – thanks to the 1631 mutual settlement – and was running it under her name, as we can see on the three games imprints.

This very address – “rue Montorgueil devant les Trois Mores, chez un Espicier” – is not common. It is to be found, though, on a rebus sheet bearing the name of another imagier, Antoine Rafflé, titled *Plaisant Rebus de ce Diable d’Argent* (ca 1589), that is kept at the Musée Carnavalet with three other, similar though anonymous rebus sheets (*Rebus sur la France*, *Rebus sur l’espérance de la France*, *Rebus sur les femmes qui se decouvrent la poitrine*).²⁰ Unfortunately Antoine Rafflé is still more obscure than Charles Petit.

Three fashionable games

Although these three prints are, so far as is known, all unique surviving copies, their subject matter can be related to other contemporary documentary sources. The three prints offer detailed rules, the texts of which can be found in the earliest European printed collection of game rules, *La maison académique: contenant un recueil general de tous les jeux divertissans pour se rejouyr agreablement dans les bonnes compagnies / par le sieur D.L.M. [i.e. De La Marinière]*, Paris, 1654, and later editions²¹ (fig. 6).

Of the three games *Le Plaisant & Nouveau jeu de la Chovette* (fig. 1) is the more familiar.

Like the *Jeu de la Guerre* that we shall see further, the print is composed of three distinct sections: a typeset title; the gameboard itself, printed from woodblock, with very florid corners; finally, under the gameboard, the rules of the game, carefully set in two columns, separated by a line of printer’s

¹⁵ The editors read *Saulée*, but it is clear we must read Saulce.

¹⁶ PRÉAUD *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

¹⁷ Philippe RENOARD, *Documents sur les imprimeurs, libraires, cartiers, graveurs...*, ayant exercé à Paris de 1450 à 1600, Paris, 1901, p. 254, SAULSE: “1er mai 1569. — Contrat de mariage de Guillaume Saulse, marchand imprimeur d’histoires, avec Marie Deffonz [Desfreux], veuve de Guillaume Vigoureux [...]. (Arch. Nat., Y 110, f° 112 v°).”

¹⁸ On Nicolas Prové (Proué or Proue), see PRÉAUD *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-9.

¹⁹ PRÉAUD *et al.*, pp. 302-303 (*sub* Vigoureux Charles). This confirms my hypothesis, *i.e.* that Charles Petit’s mother, Marie Vigoureux, was, like Charles Vigoureux and his sister Jeanne, a child of Guillaume Vigoureux, bushel maker, and Marie Desfreux (Deffonz, De Frue).

²⁰ Musée Carnavalet, Arts graphiques, HIST. G.C./B, 1591-95. Quoted in Pierre-Louis DUCHARTRE & René SAULNIER, *L’imagerie populaire. Les images de toutes les provinces françaises du XV^e siècle au Second Empire*, Paris, 1925, p. 86.

²¹ Thierry DEPAULIS, *Les lois du jeu: bibliographie de la littérature technique des jeux de cartes en français avant 1800. Suivie d’un supplément couvrant les années 1800-1850*. Paris, 1994, nos. 11, 13 (1659), 14 (1665), 16 (1668), etc. and Manfred ZOLLINGER, *Bibliographie der Spielbücher des 15. bis 18. Jahrhunderts. Erster Band: 1473-1700*. Stuttgart, 1996 (Hiersemanns bibliographische Handbücher, Bd. 12), nos. 103, 111, 119, 121.



Fig. 6: Frontispiece and title-page of *La maison des jeux academiques: contenant vn recveil general de tous les jeux diuertissans pour se rejoür & passer le temps agreablement*. Paris: Etienne Loison, 1665 (T. Depaulis Coll.)

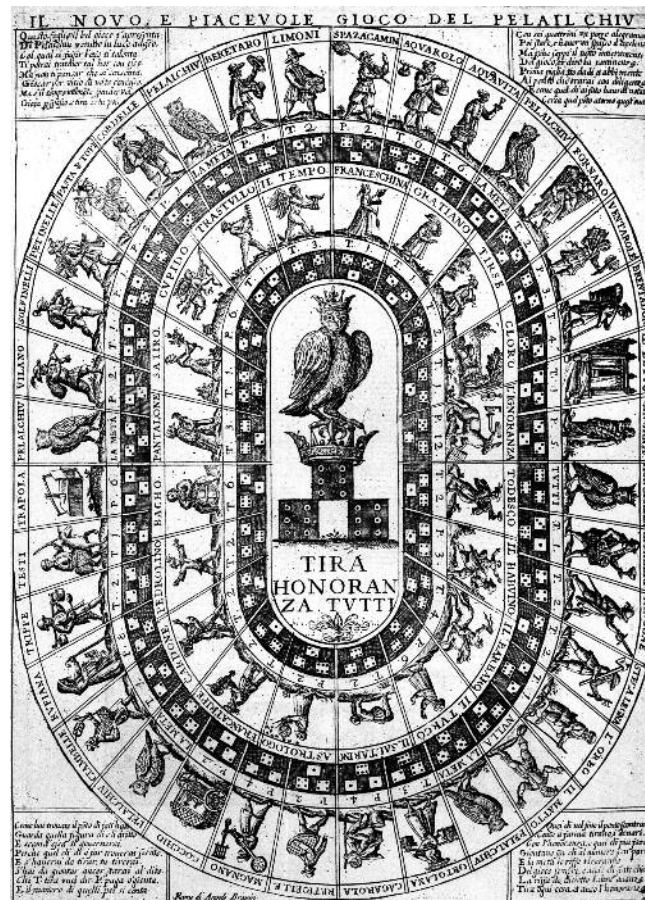


Fig. 7: *Il novo e piacevole gioco del pela il chiv*, « Rame di Angelo Bravin », etching, early 17th century.

ornements. At the bottom of the right column we read: “A PARIS, Chez la vefue Petit ruë Montorgueil, deuant les | trois Mores, chez vn Espicier à la seconde Chambre”.

In spite of its shape it is not a race game but a dice game, of the “Pay or Take” type. It is usually made of six concentric circles (or ovals) marked with symbols, like the sides of dice, and little pictures, and of spaces labelled P (“paie”), or T (“tire”, draw), followed by a number indicating the sum the player has to take or pay. Five squares read “La moitié”, one has “Rien” and another one has “TOVT”, and these also show a barn owl (French *chouette*, hence the name) or an owl. In the center there is an oblong dish with some coins.

The origins of this game are clearly set in Italy, where it is called *pela il chiù*, “fleece the owl”. As a matter of fact, the earliest known examples are Italian: one is a game engraved by Ambrogio Brambilla, published in Rome by Battista Panzera in 1589, as *Il piacevole e nuovo giuoco novamente trovato detto pela il chiù*; an almost identical game, from the early 17th century, is signed Angelo Bravin (BnF, Est. and Milan, Raccolta Bertarelli: fig. 7). The same Raccolta Bertarelli, in Milan, owns a similar game by Valentin Zorzi, in Verona, dated 1648.²² In 1614 the game *Pela il chiù* was listed in the catalogue of prints sold by Andrea and Michel’Angelo Vaccari, in Rome.²³ All these gameboards are decorated with characters from the *Commedia dell’arte*.

Interestingly the owl game has the same diffusion pattern as the game of goose, for which it is often mistaken – and which it somewhat resembles, hastily seen. There are also examples from Holland (*uylen-spel*) and Germany (*Eulenspiel*, *Kaüzchenspiel*), dating from the 17th to the mid-19th century. The game seems to have died out soon after 1850.

The Veuve Petit game is the earliest French example that is so far known. As can be seen the oval shape of the Italian games has become round in France. The rules can be read also in *La Maison académique des jeux*, here from the 1665 edition (fig. 8). A strikingly similar copy, with the same ornamented corners, was produced in Besançon by Tissot,²⁴ a cardmaker and *imagier*, whose family was in business there during the 18th century (fig. 8b).

The game is to be found too in the catalogue of Crépy, one of the most prominent 18th-century Parisian printsellers, well known for his production of goose and other race games. His version is a faithful copy of the earlier print, though printed from an engraved copper plate, and still bears the title *Nouveau [...] jeu de la Chouette, Jeu très Récréatif et très aisé à Jouer lequel se Joue suivant qu’il est marqué cy-dessous*, with the imprint “à Paris, chez Crépy rue S. Jacques à S. Pierre pres de la rue de la parcheminerie”. Although dating to ca 1745, it shows no significant change (the same symbols, and even the same mock coins in the center). The spelling of the rules has been only slightly updated (fig. 9).

The *Ieu Royal de Cupidon* (fig. 2) easily compares with other contemporary race games, like the game of goose, with which it shares the same spiral track, the same number of squares (63) and the same simple, choiceless rules. But it is made of an impressive coiled serpent that bears the game track with its squares, from the neck, on top, to its tail that ends in the middle, in a sort of tidy garden of love (a French garden).

Displayed horizontally and hand-coloured (not stencilled), the gameboard is different from the other two. Here, the text of the rules, which is typeset, invades the print somewhat wildly, with no frame to guide it. Because of a lack of space on the left the last paragraphs had to be placed on top right. A large typeset title spreads between two fleurons on top of the print: *Le Ieu Royal de Cupidon, autrement appelé le passe-temps d’Amour* with, like a sub-title, also between two printer’s ornaments, “Instruction pour l’intelligence & pratique de ce jeu”. It is exactly as the rules are introduced in *La maison académique des jeux*, 1654.

²² Known from a reprint by Pietro Bisesti: cf. Ilio NEGRI & Virgilio VERCELLONI, *I giochi di dadi, d’azzardo e di passatempo di gentiluomini e dei pirati*, Milan, 1958, Pl. Ba-1. Compare with another 17th-century Italian example signed with the monogram MR. F., reproduced in Paolo TOSCHI, *L’imagerie populaire italienne*, Paris, 1964, Pl. 146.

²³ Alberto MILANO, “Antichi giochi su carta”, in *Come giocavamo: giochi e giocattoli 1750/1960* (exhibition catalogue, Milan), Florence, 1984, p. 21.

²⁴ *Le nouveau et plaisant jeu de la chouette*, École nationale des Beaux-Arts de Paris, Estampes, Est Mas 928.

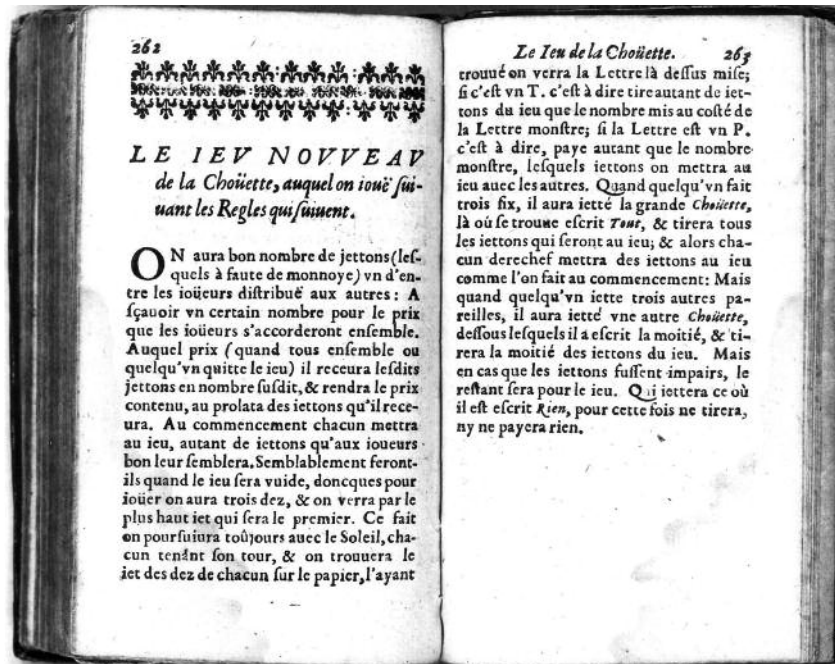


Fig. 8: “LE IEV NOUVEAU de la Choüette, auquel on iouë suivant les Regles qui suivent”, in *La maison des jeux academiques*, Paris, 1665, pp. 262-3.

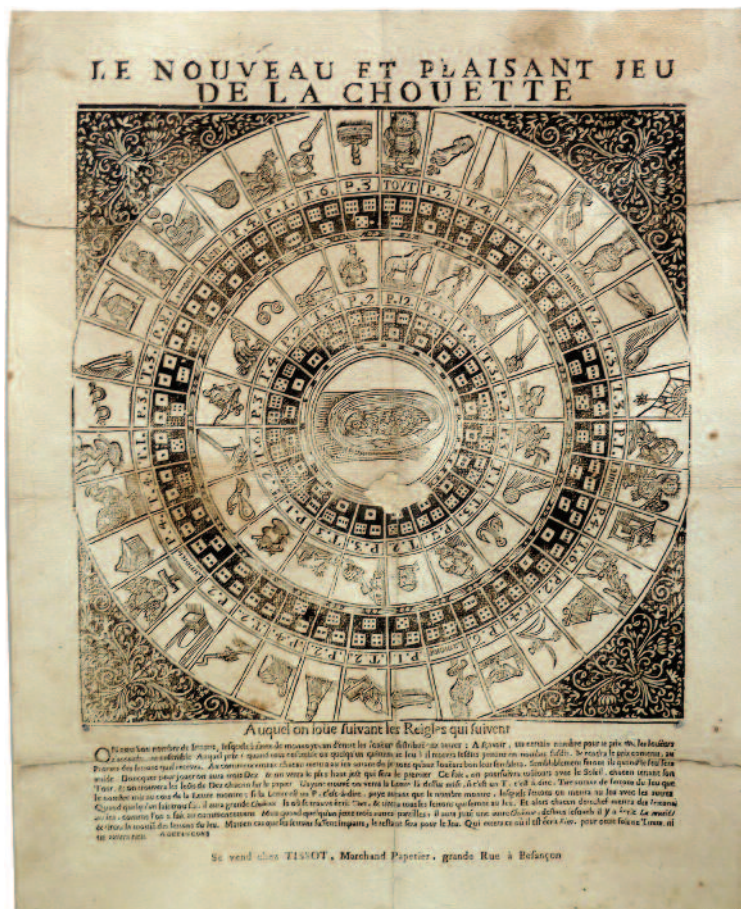


Fig. 8b: *LE NOUVEAU ET PLAISANT JEU / DE LA CHOUETTE*, “Se vend chez TISSOT, Marchand Papetier, grande Rue à Besançon”, woodcut, 18th century (ENSBA, Estampes).

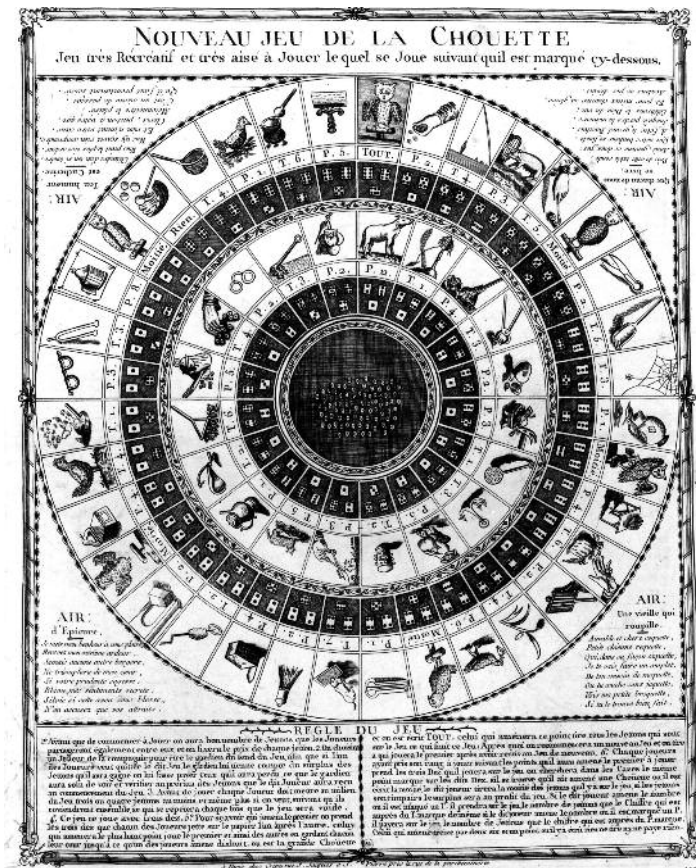


Fig. 9: NOUVEAU JEU DE LA CHOUETTE, Jeu très Récréatif et très aisé à Jouer le quel se Joue suivant qu'il est marqué cy-dessous, « à Paris, chez Crépy rue S. Jacques à S. Pierre pres de la rue de la parcheminerie », etching, ca 1745 (BnF, Est.).

The imprint is on the bottom right of the print, in three lines: “A PARIS | Chez La veufue Charles Petit, ruë Mont- | orgueil, chez vn Espicier deuant les trois Mores”. Only the game of Cupidon gives the first name of the deceased printseller. Could we infer that the gameboard had first been published by Charles Petit? And that the present copy would be a reprint, made after his death, by his widow? And the other two games, published a little later?

In the central square (fig. 10) one can see monograms: on the forefront left, CA (C above A), on the right, S DM (D inside M), perhaps S DMA (DMA overlapping); in one of the flowerbeds on the right: IIC (ILC). The same monogram CA (read AC) is present on an engraving by Nicolas de Mathonière representing the effigy of King Henri IV, as dead, on a ceremonial bed, in 1610.²⁵ These initials may be those of A. Callias, an engraver who is so little known that there is some uncertainty on the exact form of his name, which could be read Callais. However, we clearly read *A. Callias, fecit* on a 1594 woodcut.²⁶ The letters IIC are more likely to be ILC, a well-attested monogram of Jean IV Leclerc (1560-1622, active 1587-1622), the publisher of many engravings, either woodcuts or copper engravings. His signature appears in a *Portrait en pied de Charles de Bourbon, comte de Soissons, grand maitre de France* (early 17th century), where one can also see the SDMA monogram, very similar to that we

25 See Séverine LEPAPE, “Le roi est mort, vive le roi !” De la continuité en gravure et en royauté”, *Revue de la BnF*, 28, April 2008, pp. 48-53. I am grateful to Séverine Lepape for providing this interesting information.

26 Bibliothèque Nationale, *Inventaire du fonds français, Graveurs du XVIe siècle*, II, Paris, 1938, p. 263 under ‘CALLIAS, A.C.’; see also *Ibid.*, I, Paris, 1932, p. 209 under ‘CALLIAS, A. ou Cl.’ for another (woodblock) print of 1594.



Fig. 10: Central space of *Le Ieu Royal de Cupidon, autrement appelé le passe-temps d'Amour*, Paris, Veuve (Charles) Petit, ca 1640.

have here. Could the Ieu Royal de Cupidon by the Veuve Petit be derived from a previous woodcut by Jean IV Leclerc?

To this day, no such gameboard has been found in the French-speaking area. This game, though, seems to have been particularly popular in the Low Countries and in the British Isles. In their book *Papertoys* (2005), Piet and Leontine Buijnsters show a copy which is very similar, including its title, *Het nieuw slange spel anders genaemt koninclycke tytckorting van Cupido*, which sounds as a literal translation from the French – unless it is otherwise – but done by etching and with a different scene in the center. The date is roughly the same as the French print, around 1640.²⁷ Let us not forget that the same publisher, Claes Jansz. Visscher, also made an owl game, *Het nieuw tytckortighe uylen-spel*.²⁸

The Buijnsters record six later Cupido games, all deriving from the Visscher copy, all with the same title:²⁹ one of these was published in Amsterdam, by the H. Rynders heirs (c. 1790-1800) then later reprinted (with the same engraver's signature: A. Bouwens) by J. Wendel en Zoon (c. 1820/30). Other examples can be added to the list.

The central pictures of these Dutch Cupido games all show a peasants' dance (a man on the left, and a woman on the right, dancing, with a winged Cupid between them); this scene is strongly reminiscent of Brueghel the Elder's celebrated painting *The Dance of the Bride* (1561), or it may rather have been inspired by an engraving of the painting, e.g. by Pieter van der Heyden, published by Cock.³⁰

²⁷ Piet J. BUIJNSTERS & Leontine BUIJNSTERS-SMETS, *Papertoys: Speelprenten en papieren speelgoed in Nederland (1640-1920)*. Zwolle, 2005, pp. 18 and 109. Jan VAN DER WAALS, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw: van kunst tot kastpapier* (exhibition catalogue, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen), Rotterdam, 2006, no. 36 (a reference I owe to Séverine Lepape).

²⁸ BUIJNSTERS & BUIJNSTERS-SMETS, *op. cit.*, p. 17; WAALS, *op. cit.*, no. 34.

²⁹ BUIJNSTERS & BUIJNSTERS-SMETS, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110.

³⁰ Cf. Charles DE TOLNAY & Piero BIANCONI, *Tout l'œuvre peint de Brueghel l'ancien*, Nlle éd., Paris, 1981, no. 61 and commentary pp. 106-7.

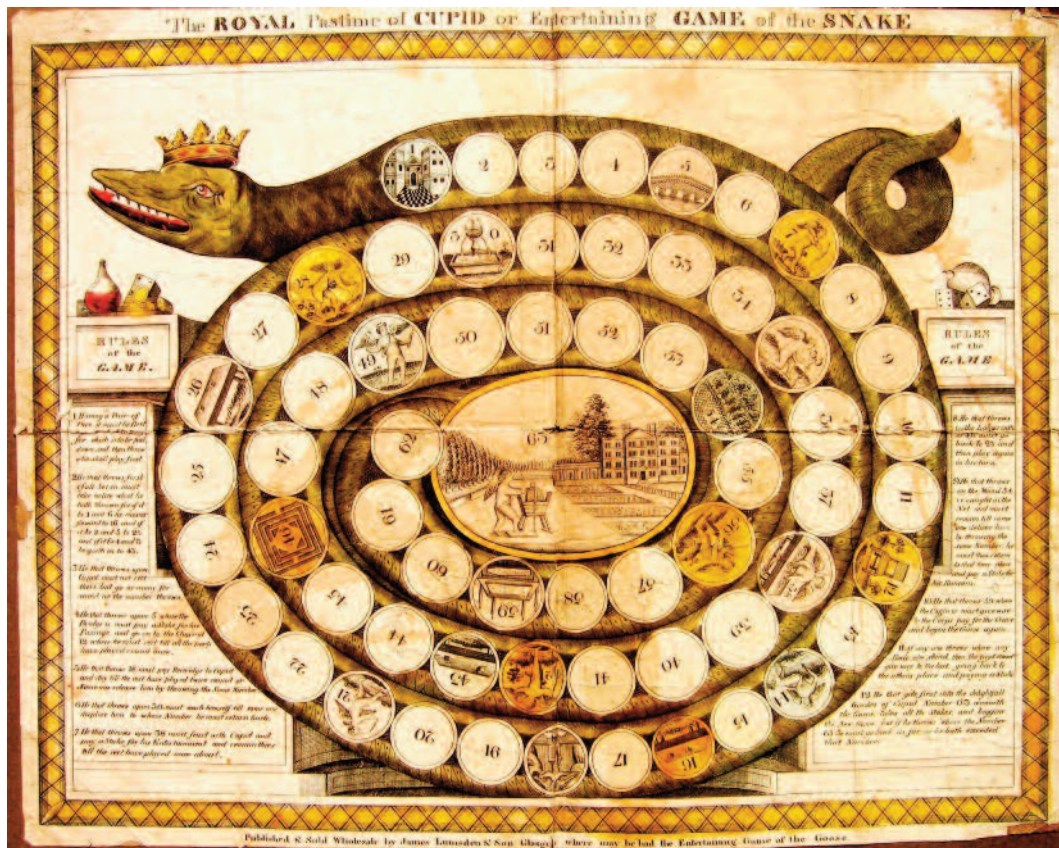


Fig. 11: *The ROYAL Pastime of CUPID or Entertaining GAME of the SNAKE*, Glasgow, James Lumsden & Son, ca 1800 (Adrian Seville Coll., Chislehurst, UK).

This kind of game clearly was popular in England, and also in Scotland. A similar print, though with a different central scene, published in Glasgow by James Lumsden & Son, ca 1810 (fig. 11), is copied on an earlier English version, known to have existed since the late 17th century, for example by John Garrett, active in London from 1667 to 1718. Like the Visscher engraving, the Garrett game-board has a peasants' dance in the center. The influence of Dutch engravings on the English popular prints has recently been highlighted.³¹ Here we have a good example of this influence. We are even entitled to wonder whether the *Jeu de Cupidon* by the Veuve Petit does not have a Dutch or Flemish origin.

Although less attractive, *Le ROYAL & Nouveau jeu de la Guerre* (fig. 3) is perhaps the most interesting of all three games. The adjectives “royal” and “nouveau” seem to be here quite justified, for the game looks really original, “invented”, maybe here in its very first edition, if we trust the (engraved) inscription “Avec Privilege du Roy”. We cannot presently identify its author, but it is a fascinating example of a very early ‘proprietary’ game.

Like the *Jeu de la Chouette*, the print is made of three distinct sections: a typeset title, between two fleurons; the game board, whose round design (a rare shape in board games of this class) is remarkable, as are the finely engraved corners; and finally in the bottom, the rules of the game, set in two columns, framed with simple and double ornamental rules. A very ornate C introduces the text. At the bottom is printed, in one line: “A PARIS, Chez la vefue Petit, ruë Mont-orgueil, chez vn Espicier deuant les trois Mores”.

³¹ See Malcom JONES, *The print in early modern England: an historical oversight*. New Haven / London, 2010. This ‘northern’ influence is also sensible in France.

The Jeu de la Guerre is clearly derived from draughts, but it is an asymmetric variation, that is, with unequal forces. The rules³² say: “Ce jeu représente une forteresse assiégée et bloquée de tous côtés. La forteresse a 4 bastions, marqués A, avec un fort au milieu marqué B. (...) La première tranchée a 8 petits forts marqués C et 8 redoutes entre les forts marqués D. La seconde tranchée est de 16 redoutes marquées E. (...)”

Celui qui défend le fort a 5 dames et les place sur les 4 bastions marqués A et une au fort qui est au milieu marqué B. Celui qui attaque a 7 pions et une dame, et les place dans les 8 petits forts marqués C, qui sont sur la première tranchée.”

Thus it is like a “besieged fortress”. The player who defends the fortress has four kings (*dames*), whereas the attacker has 7 draughtsmen (*pions*) and one ‘king’. Kings may move in all directions, while simple draughtsmen can move to the right or to the left, or forward, but not backward. All can capture, and can be huffed. “Celuy qui demeure maistre du fort a gagné la partie.” (“The player who takes control of the fortress wins the game.”)

Of course this is slightly reminiscent of hunt games as in Murray,³³ but in the Jeu de la Guerre all sides can capture. It is a truly original game, which cannot be mistaken for other invented games of “war”, such as a sort of table billiards which is described also in *La maison academique* of 1654, or another game, designed by Gilles de La Boissière, published in the late 17th century, which is a combined card and race game. (See Phillippa Plock & Adrian Seville’s following contribution in this volume.)

The Jeu de la Guerre may have been published by Charles Petit during his lifetime, which spanned, as we have seen, between 1607 and 1636, or by his widow. But it cannot be later than 1645.

In an early 17th-century book compendium which is kept at the Réserve des Livres rares of the BnF, I have found a fragment of the same game: only the text parts (title and rules) were kept – the rest (the gameboard) was thrown away – and these bits of paper were glued at the end of the volume. This compendium used to belong to the well-known Fabri family (the binding bears Fabri de Peiresc’s monogram), and includes: [Ruy López de Sigura], *Le royal jeu des eschets, avec son invention, science et pratique*. Paris, 1636; [Euverte Jollivet], *L’excellent jeu du triquetrac, (...), reveu & augmenté en cette dernière édition*. Paris, 1639; and an instruction sheet printed on both sides, POUR L’INTELLIGENCE DU IEV DV MONDE for Pierre Duval’s *Jeu du Monde*, 1645.³⁴ A close examination of the remains of the Jeu de la Guerre shows that it does not use the same typefaces. Also it has no imprint and no privilege, although the area where they should be seen is conserved. Therefore it is another edition, most certainly later.

Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580-1637) had already passed away when *L’excellent jeu du triquetrac* was published (1639) and a binding that includes a 1645 text could obviously not be made for him. It is without doubt his younger brother Palamède Fabri de Valavez (1582-1645) who, having inherited Peiresc’s collections, acquired these game books and had them bound together in a nice red morocco binding adorned with his brother’s monogram (title on spine: IEVS). After his death the book collection was broken up. Therefore 1645 is a solid terminus ante quem, which I am tempted to extend to the other two games.

A further evidence of the game’s popularity is that its rules were printed in *La maison academique*, of 1654, and later editions.



These three gameboards by the Veuve Petit, printed between 1636 and 1645, can be added to the increasing number of woodcuts that were produced in the rue Montorgueil under Louis XIII’s reign (1610-1643), therefore much later than was previously assumed.

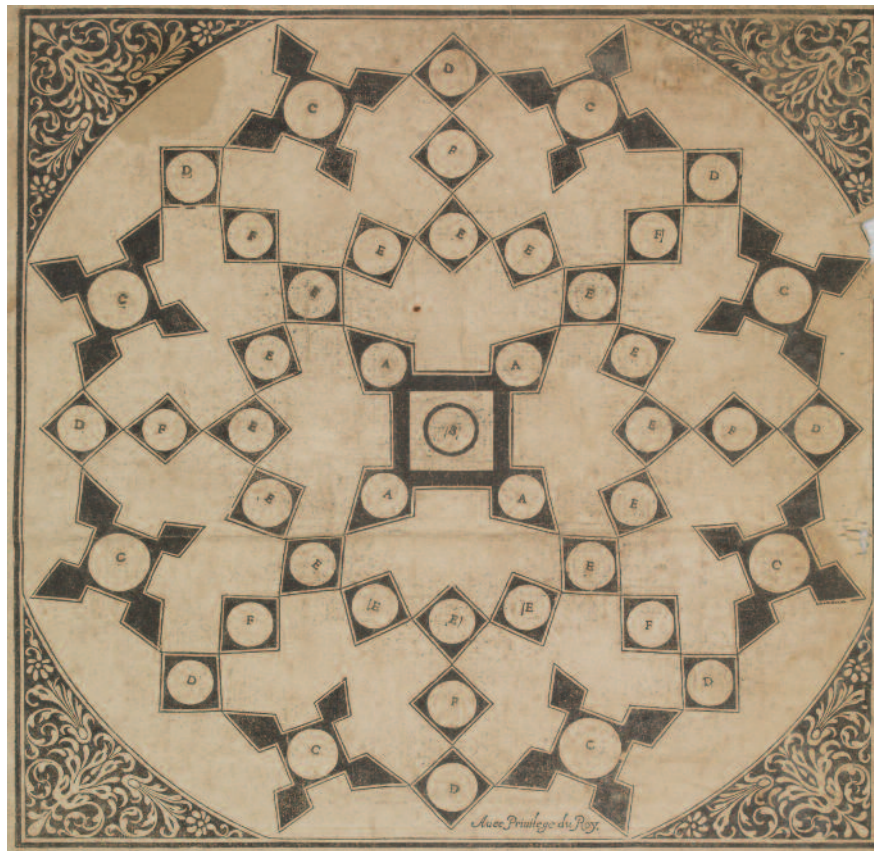
We have seen that the Ieu Royal de Cupidon and the Plaisant & Nouveau jeu de la Chovette did

³² Here in modern spelling.

³³ Harold J.R. MURRAY, *A history of board games other than chess*. Oxford, 1952.

³⁴ BnF, Réserve des Livres rares, RES. P.V- 352 (*Le royal jeu des eschets*), RES. P.V- 353 (*L’excellent jeu du triquetrac*), RES. P.V- 354 (*Pour l’intelligence du iev dv monde*) and RES. P.V- 355 (cuttings from *Royal & Nouveau jeu de la Guerre*).

exist as etchings in the Low Countries. It is not impossible that both were copied from copper engravings of northern origin. The Flemish influence on the earliest Parisian engravers appears to be strong at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries. Jean Leclerc, whose monogram seems to be visible in the central square of the Cupidon game, is one of these print publishers who mainly drew on prints from the Low Countries.³⁵ He could have copied – before 1622 – a *Slange spel* published in Antwerp, and the game could have crept to Charles Petit's, then to his widow's catalogue. Even the Jeu de la Chovette, in spite of its well-documented Italian origin, might have come from the Netherlands too (with a circular shape).



Gameboard of *Le ROYAL & Nouveau jeu de la Guerre*, Paris, Veuve (Charles) Petit, rue Montorgueil, ca 1640.

35 Séverine LEPAPE, "Contribution à l'œuvre gravé de Jean IV Leclerc", in *L'estampe au Grand Siècle: études offertes à Maxime Préaud*, Paris, 2010, p. 135-155, specially p. 141.