# EARLY CARD EXPORT FROM FLORENCE ?

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Maybe you have once seen the following film: *The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain*. What follows here is a somewhat similar event, but the corresponding title should be: *The Florentine Who Went Up a Mountain But Came Down a Hill*. Indeed, the description of my research, at least in its present stage, is like the description of a climb on an enormous mountain, which ultimately must be recognized just as a little hill. What this exactly means will become clear after a few pages of text.

# 1 – PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

## 1.1 − From the book of Arnold Esch

Arnold Esch has studied for years the registers of the Roman customs. On the basis of his articles, Thierry Depaulis (1) published a pioneering article that allowed card historians to become acquainted with these new data. In the meantime, Esch’s articles have been collected, augmented and published as a whole book, (2) with some further data that Ross Caldwell has introduced into the discussion of card historians. (3) From this book, the date of 1453 has then been taken as the first document of triumph imports into Rome. (4)

The starting point of the present work is again the important book of Arnold Esch quoted above. If we examine the amounts of the various goods imported into Rome, we find first of all textiles, both wood and silk, in amounts of tons. Other items were imported in very large quantities, to begin with wine. We cannot pretend that playing cards were a significant fraction of the imports: a typical case could be that of a big import of various goods, in which cards were present in a very secondary place.

**1.1.1. The playing-cards**. In the same book, several other merchants are recorded while paying the tax due for the imported goods at the Roman customs, which corresponded at the time to 5% of the estimated value at the “dogana di terra” and 6,5% at the “dogana di porto”.

On pp. 50 and 51of the mentioned book by Esch, there is a whole paragraph dealing precisely with playing cards. This belongs to Chapter I: *Le importazioni nella Roma del primo Rinascimento 1445-1470.*

E carte da gioco. Nei registri doganali romani del resto non si chia­mano mai «naibbi» o «tarocchi», ma sempre solo «carte da giocare» e «triunfi»; sono trattate come due cose diverse (quindi divise nella stessa fornitura, per esempio «para 30 di triunfe et dozine 4 di carte da giocha­re»), contate in «dozine» o «para», e portate soprattutto da fiorentini e da nordici.

Un fornitore regolare di carte da gioco è il fiorentino Pierozzo di Ser Francesco: «dozine 3 de triunfi dozenalj et dozine 1 de charte da giochare», valore stimato quasi 6 duc.; «dozine 4 de triunfi senza oro», valore stimato quasi 6 duc.; «16 para triunphi, 5 bol.», valore dunque 1,4 duc.; «para 48 de triomphi», circa 5,5 duc. di valore stimato.

Esch remarks that we never find cards mentioned as naibbi or tarocchi, but only carte da giocare and triunfi; on the other hand playing cards were always differently recorded if they belonged to common cards or to the trionfi family. He speaks as main provenances of both Florentine and Nordic (plausibly intended by him as coming from the northern parts of Italy and central parts of Europe as Germany and France). He gives in one note some bibliography, in particular Morena (5) and Zdekauer (6) and in a second note the references to card imports in the years 1463 and 1468 by the Florentine Pierozzo di Ser Francesco, whom he describes as a regular supplier of playing cards.

Unfortunately, Morena’s article deals with later times, Zdekauer’s with earlier ones, and Pierozzo is the only “regular supplier” quoted − nobody else is mentioned in that way. In all the cases, in which we find cards quoted, we also find the name of the merchant who pays the corresponding taxes, but this occurs together with many other items of various kinds.

We pass then to Chapter II in the book, dealing with the later years (1470-1485). We find here a remarkable amount of cards imported, but unfortunately, very little information is provided on the corresponding suppliers.

An interesting comment can be found on p. 243: « In any case, it is clear that there were not yet traders who concentrated exclusively or even predominantly on art. Art objects always accounted for only one or more or less important element in the range of their goods.» If, in the last quarter of the 15th century, this was the situation for art objects, it was certainly even less favourable for playing cards: it is not difficult to imagine that no merchant could exist dealing with playing cards only – the merchant whom we would meet with greater pleasure than all the remaining ones.

As in Chapter I, also in Chapter II we find a whole paragraph exclusively dedicated to playing cards.

Simple coloured prints would have been suitable for pilgrims, but also for the production of playing cards. The «carte stampate da jogare» were clearly printed («stampate») and could be quite cheap, for example a bund­le brought in by a Florentine with a value of around half a duc. A «sca­tolina di carte da giocare» imported in 1477 was more expensive at an esti­mated value of about 4 duc.; the duty was paid by the respected Florentine Bernardo Tornaquinci, who in 1480 brought in eight dozen «carte pichole da giochare» with an estimated value of 6 duc. Playing cards in general seem to have come from Florence; a regular supplier is Pierozo di Ser Fran­cesco. Estimated values vary (five «dozine» at 2 duc., ten «para» at 1½ duc., 200 «para» at 8½ duc.), and consignments were sometimes large − for example, 23 duc. worth at a time. Also mentioned are «trionfi», that is, printed or painted tarock cards: for example, a Florentine brings in «quat­tro para de carte indorate e doi para de trionfi». Another Florentine imports «una cassetta de trionfi et carte dajocare» with an estimated value of 6 duc. 18 bol., «23 para triunfi» with a value of 7 duc. 54 bol., «para 48 de triomphi» with a value of 5½ duc. In other cases «para trionfi» are asses­sed at 7½ bol., or 10 bol., or 23 1/3 bol. − differences in value are to be ex­pected in goods of this sort.

Regg. 53, imported by Johanni de Pino. A consignment of «carte da giochare franciose», imported in 1480 by a Frenchman, was assessed at 30 duc. for 100 «dozine».

We read that most cards came from Florence, even if sometimes a provenance from North Italy and/or Central Europe is indicated (7) and in a given case both cards and supplier are stated to be French. (8) All this information is not enough and for one answer obtained we get a new question, difficult to answer: were all of the cards coming from Florence also manufactured in Florence or, at least in part, just passing through?

**1.1.2. The merchants’ families.** What is of the greatest interest for us it to obtain a list of the names of these merchants, who introduced in Rome playing cards and trionfi. To deduce the wanted list in a reliable way appears to be far from easy.

A first list must be compiled with the names that can be found in the book, more or less directly involved in card imports to Rome. Before looking at the merchants, who in principle could have imported cards from Florence to Rome, we must list those who certainly did.

On p. 63 we find Antonio Del Sasso, a coworker of Antonio Dati for the years around 1460. On p. 64 is indicated Francesco Della Casa for the year 1464, and Pierozzo di Ser Francesco, again, on p. 65, for the year 1464 but with other imports from 1456 to the 1470s. In particular, Pierozzo di Ser Francesco is stated here as a regular supplier of special goods.

Further merchants involved with imports of playing cards can be found in Chapter II: Ardito Arditi on p. 128, Johan De Pino (probably Jean de Pineau) and a Frenchman who however imports French cards in 1475 in a note on p. 247, and Bernardo Tornaquinci in 1480 on the same p. 247. Moreover, in Chapter V, p. 270, we find the earliest quotation of Giovanni da Pistoia, 1453.

Independent of cards, a particular attention is provided by Esch to the Florentine merchants and to their imports in Rome. The general situation may be clearly seen from a series of Tables, inserted in pp. 53 to 56, in which the main categories of goods, together with their amount and cost are summarized for the years 1452 to 1462. The Table for 1452 is reproduced below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1452 | Stoffe di lana | Stoffe di seta | Lini cotoni | Spezie droghe | Altro | Totale | Altro.100  /Totale |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Piero e Giovanni de’ Medici | 5167 | 3499 | 5 | 287 | 91 | 9049 | 1,01 |
| Tommaso Spinelli | 3320 | 325 | 751 | 33 | 57 | 4486 | 1,27 |
| Francesco e Carlo Cambini | 3433 | 88 | 42 | 135 | 60 | 3758 | 1,60 |
| Jacovo di Nicola | 3386 | 253 | - | - | 193 | 3832 | 5,04 |
| Daniello di Ser Tieri | 2777 | - | 47 | - | 29 | 2853 | 1,02 |
| Francesco Baroncelli | 1651 | 166 | 183 | 5 | 147 | 2152 | 6,83 |
| Piero e Jacopo de’ Pazzi | 2364 | 89 | 22 | - | 66 | 2541 | 2,60 |
| Niccolo Bartolini | - | 18 | - | - | 46 | 64 | 71,88 |
| Odo Franceschi | 276 | - | - | - | 8 | 284 | 2,82 |
| Stefano de Guelfo | - | 1063 | 672 | - | 40 | 1775 | 2,25 |
| Domenico Salvetti | 3061 | 190 | 932 | - | 432 | 4615 | 9,36 |
| Girolamo e Stefano de Capo | - | 4047 | 47 | - | 60 | 4154 | 1,44 |
| Antonio Dati | 33 | 2421 | - | - | - | 2454 |  |
| Spannocchi & Miraballi | 562 | 120 | 1139 | 196 | 69 | 2086 | 3,31 |
| Bonifacio da Milano | 70 | - | 1164 | - | 23 | 1257 | 1,83 |
| Massimo de’ Massimi | 208 | 310 | 187 | 378 | 331 | 1414 | 23,41 |
| Paolo Santacroce | 860 | - | - | - | 13 | 873 | 1,49 |
| Jacovo di Lello de’ Cenci | 68 | - | - | - |  | 68 |  |

I have added the last column with the percent ratios of “Altro” with respect to the total amount of the goods. When this ratio is higher, there may be a greater probability to find unusual items, as playing cards were at the time. It is evident that only two of these merchants didn’t import “Altro”, namely goods different from those listed in the previous columns, which represented clearly the main part of the commerce. Except for Antonio Dati and Jacovo Cenci, we cannot therefore exclude that playing cards were also imported by these merchants.

At first sight, it is not easy to distinguish who of these merchants were based in Florence. Beginning from the bottom of the table, we find three merchants who belonged to Roman families and there was the main location of their trade. For Bonifacio da Milano we don’t have his family name and his Milanese provenance makes somewhat more probable that he too had his trade established in Rome. Spannocchi & Miraballi too don’t sound as specific names of known Florentine families.

Let us, at least for the moment, limit the investigation to the first dozen merchants. Dati family, Florentine of course, we don’t take into account, because no “other” goods are recorded at this name. For two of the merchants listed, we have first to search their family names. This is easily done for Daniello di Ser Tieri, since in the same book by Esch we find on p. 62 that he was often indicated by the customs officers as Daniello di Ser Gieri Baronti.

We have got a list of a dozen families of merchants, with only that of Jacovo di Nicola to be determined, if possible. I obtained some improvement in identifying him, but, curiously, it doesn’t yet provide the family name that I was looking for. I found, following the modern channels of Google books, that his full name was Jacopo di Nicola di Bartolo di Nicola. It is possible that these merchants didn’t get a family name, because their family was already extinguished when using family names became the rule. However, when you have a Jacopo di Nicola you may wonder if his family name could already be, or soon become, Nicoli or, better, Niccoli. Indeed, we know, from data of some years later on, that the Florentine Niccoli family was active in silk manufacturing and trade.

In conclusion, these are the families that are to be searched in Florence: Medici, Spinelli, Cambini, Baronti, Baroncelli, Pazzi, Bartolini, Franceschi, de Guelfo, Salvetti, and de Capo; moreover, a few merchants without a family name provided: Giovanni da Pistoia, Pierozzo di Ser Francesco, and Jacovo di Nicola maybe Niccoli. With this, we have already obtained a remarkable set of merchants to investigate.

Now, we have to verify if it is possible to find in Florence any correspondent record for playing cards. In Rome we read the lists of imports (and neglect those, also existing, of exports); in Florence we would like to read the lists of exports, at least the list of the goods addressed to Rome, corresponding to what has been found by Esch as imports. We can stop here with the information that can be deduced from Esch’s book and use it for the following step: the research in Florence.

## 1.2 − Publications on Florentine merchants

Before searching the documents of the time, my attention has been focused on the easier task to search for recent studies published on the general topic. We are interested in makers and merchants with some trade in playing-cards; it is not possible however to find specific publications on this subject. This means that we have to search for studies on the Florentine families of merchants, independent of the particular goods of their trade, with however a special attention to the list of families that has been extracted from Esch’s book.

**1.2.1. Florentine producers and merchants**. For obtaining an idea of the situation of the local arts and crafts, several works are available; for instance the chapter by Bianchi and Grossi in a known work in several volumes. (9) It has been surprising for me to see that the “botteghe” where books and paintings were produced were small and few, hard (for me) to relate to the trade of these goods, sent from Florence to many towns and countries.

On the other hand, it is not difficult to gain an overview of the situation of Florentine financial, trade, and productive systems at the middle of the 15th century, on the basis of recent books, such as those of Hoshino, (10) Tognetti, (11) and Goldthwaite. (12)

As for the commerce of the time in general, the main object of trade for the richest Florentine merchants, roughly speaking, was… money. They had established a system of banks, which covered all the main towns of Europe, with such centres far from Italy as Geneva, Bruges, Paris, London, Barcelona, Lisbon, and many others. Then we come to the second kind of goods: after money, maybe 1/50 of the total value of the exchanges (at least, for the richest merchants-bankers) was represented by trade of wool and silk, together with other goods. Maybe 1/50 of the latter trade can be attributed to objects of the fine arts, to begin with religious paintings and sculptures. Again, at most 1/50 of the last trade can be assigned to playing cards, thus something entirely unremarkable, with respect to the huge amounts of money that one can find in the books of accounts of these merchants.

Note that the ratio of 1/50 is just an approximation introduced by me, but it is not just a result of my imagination: you can determine this ratio more precisely, and of course use different ratios for the different steps above, but something of this kind really occurred.

**1.2.2. Medici**. To search useful information on this family is rather difficult, just because there is too much information available. In this case, it will be easier to directly search in the primary sources, if available. Maybe as the only exception, a classic book (13) can be considered, precisely dedicated to the economic activity of the Medici family in the years of interest.

Going down in the families of the Table above, we are fortunate enough to find nothing less than a whole book devoted to the families and their trades of both the second and the third merchant listed.

**1.2.3. Spinelli**. As already indicated, we have a whole book about this family and its trades. (14) Here the primary source is represented by family account books, with the problem (for any personal involvement in further verifications) that they are kept in the USA. This means that I have mainly studied the printed book, because flying to the USA is not among my present projects. Thanks however to the advanced state of book digitalization in the USA, there was a certain hope that the same ancient documents can be read through the internet. The relevant pages have actually been digitalized, and can be read through the web, but unfortunately for obtaining an access to most of them one must search from within the local departments. (15)

**1.2.4. Cambini**. This was an important family and the whole book devoted to their financial activity (16) is based on family books kept in the “Archivio dell’Ospedale degli Innocenti” (AOIF), apparently a very important Florentine archive in this field, in which however I never had the occasion to enter up to now.

Sergio Tognetti, university professor and author of the book mentioned, answered my questions rapidly, kindly, and… discouraging. In his professional research in the account books of the Florentine merchants and in some customs registers kept in Pisa, he did find some reference to card playing, (17) but this had only occurred by chance and he considered that my search was like looking for a needle in a hay-stack. (18) (The same assessment has been advanced to me by other professional scholars too, and this has further led me ultimately to believe that in my hay-stack there were zero needles instead of one.)

**1.2.5. Other families**. Among the family names quoted, it is easy to find some information, because several of them were typical of known personages of the Florentine politics or culture. However, I could find, up to now, no specific study about any of these merchants and his trade in the time of our interest.

Of course we would like to know something more about the first merchant quoted: Giovanni da Pistoia. His provenance from the town of Pistoia does not prove that he had there the basis for his trade: probably he was only born there and could be considered as a Florentine merchant at the time. A merchant with this name is mentioned some years later in Bari, seemingly associated with a group of merchants from Milan; (19) if he is the same merchant found in Rome, we cannot expect to find information about him in Florence. This case I have thus studied separately. (20)

Another merchant mentioned more than once with reference to playing cards is Pierozzo di Ser Francesco. He certainly belonged to the rich Della Luna family, which we find represented also in later years.

**1.2.6. Conclusion**. We have arrived at the point that a search among the primary sources becomes necessary. What must be looked for? We can outline an ordered list, to be followed with more or less optimism.

Number 1 is clearly to find inventories and account books of the card makers themselves. This requires a very high degree of optimism, to the point that hallucination is not far.

Number 2 is to find registers of the customs, of the same kind of those studied in Rome by Esch.

Number 3 (only, even if we have just discussed about this till now) is to find registers and inventories of the individual Florentine merchants or companies that we have found active in Rome.

# 2 − ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI FIRENZE (ASFI)

Now we are ready to enter the huge ASFI. In a little while, our hopes for points 1 and 2 above receive a disappointing answer. It is possible to find documents of this kind, but this can better be done for some centuries later on. As for the documents of cardmakers, this result was not too much disappointing, since this was the situation actually easier to expect, on the basis of previous searches, even by me.

## 2.1 – Florentine cardmakers

Information on cardmakers can, in principle, be found in several sections of the ASFI, but none of them provides a satisfactory correspondence.

**2.1.1. Catasto**. The first collection is that of 1427 and lists all the Florentine families with the actual components, their possessions, debts, any data useful for fixing the tax that they had to pay to the commune. Here, a cardmaker can be found, Antonio di Luca, who *Fa i naibi*. (21) Other Catasti were compiled in the following years, and other cardmakers are listed there, with their profession annotated, but it is practically impossible to discover how many of the cardmakers active were explicitly recorded as such. (22)

**2.1.2. Arte dei medici e speziali**. A specific Arte (the official association of the producers) for cardmakers could not exist, because the existing Arti did not allow a further multiplication of the acknowledged ones. Actually, painters too did not have their own Arte either – they were admitted into Arte dei medici e speziali, one of the major ones. What a painter had professionally in common with a physician or a spice-seller is not obvious, but the link could be found through the paints that he used. These paints were considered together with spices and traded by spice-sellers.

In order to begin an activity in Florence, it was necessary to register (immatricolare) and pay a tax (this tax was not due when a son substituted his father in the job). Books of such records are kept and for later years even cardmakers can be found there, such as the renowned Padovano. Probably, the time of mid 15th century was however too early for cardmakers to become registered as such.

**2.1.3. Mercanzia**. Many original books (14168 items!) are kept from “Tribunale della Mercanzia”. The main part of the contents are civil suits and also criminal cases tried by the Court of Mercanzia. (The corresponding building is still there in front of Palazzo Vecchio, but has become Museo Gucci in the last weeks.) Clearly, the questions discussed were those of disagreements in trade conditions, deals, and so on. I have examined a few books for the time under examination, but there is too much scattered information for my interest, and almost always I had a greater than usual trouble in reading these writings.

## 2.2 – Florentine customs

The fact that also official documents of the public offices of customs are only present for later times was on the contrary rather unexpected on my part.

**2.2.1. Dogana di Firenze**. In principle, this could be the section to be studied in parallel with the similar one studied by Esch in Rome. It contains no less than 3621 items, but unfortunately their dates (1568-1865) are out of the time limits of our interest.

**2.2.2. Consoli del mare**. This section too could be of interest, and in this case the time interval, 1362-1531, appeared to be more promising. However, after the first item of the year 1362, the remaining ones are all of the 16th century.

**2.2.3. Raccolta disposizioni doganali F. Pistolesi**. This is a collection privately compiled by an officer of the customs in the 19th century. Here too the time interval, 1353-1854, appears promising for our search, but only two items contain documents earlier than the 16th century, and what is kept there is really not important at all.

In conclusion, we are at once left with just our point 3 above.

## 2.3 – Florentine families

Here are the two lists of the names to look for:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Giovanni da Pistoia 1453 | Baroncelli |
| Pierozzo della Luna 1456-70s | Baronti |
| Antonio del Sasso c1460 | Bartolini |
| Francesco della Casa 1464 | Cambini |
| Ardito Arditi c1470 | Dati |
| Bernardo Tornaquinci 1480 | De Capo |
|  | De Guelfo |
|  | Franceschi |
|  | Giuntini |
|  | Medici |
|  | Miraballi |
|  | Niccoli |
|  | Pazzi |
|  | Salvetti |
|  | Spannocchi |
|  | Spinelli |
|  | Strozzi |

The list on the left is for the merchants who have been recorded to have imported playing cards into Rome; the list on the right is of Florentine merchants who mainly imported textiles, but who may also have imported playing cards.

**2.3.1. Archivi delle famiglie**. It does not appear as a difficult task to find some information on these families. One has to think that many visitors of the ASFI ask there precisely about documents of the Florentine families, in many cases for academic research, but also for simply finding information on their own ancestors. Therefore, if you have any question of this kind, it is easier to find assistance from the staff of the archive, well accustomed to help for this particular task.

The main question is that we are not looking for biographies or chronicles of these families, such as can even be found in the encyclopedias. We are looking for information on their trade, with particular attention to their possible exports of playing cards.

Well, which are then the specific tools for this research? For several Florentine families, we find that their books of life history, accounts, various contents, are precisely kept in ASFI. This is the first section to search. Unfortunately, among the names listed before, only Medici family is represented here, and in this case we have much more documents than required for our search.

**2.3.2. Medici**. The section to search in this case is *Archivio mediceo avanti il principato*. It was once possible to read the original documents, but this is no longer allowed now. In principle, the situation is much improved, since all these documents are available in the ASFI as microfilm copies or even at home as files with internet access. (23) My study is in progress, but most documents are letters of private or political subject. Up to now, I found very little of the searched kind of inventories of goods and their trade. Also in the several inventories of the contents of their houses, I could find no pack of playing cards.

**2.3.3. Soprintendenza and SIUSA.** A second possibility for family archives is to search them at the lists of Soprintendenza. They either have these archives in their location, or can allow to access family archives kept still now by the families themselves in their mansions. In ASFI a list of several pages is kept for these families. Unfortunately, none of “our” families is present there.

On the other hand, we have just to input SIUSA in our browser and an updated list of families with private archives can be found in internet. (24) It is possible that new entries emerge soon, but up to now I could not find any of “our” families.

**2.3.4. Libri di commercio e di famiglie**. This provides a third possibility, and one can use its recent four-volumes inventory. (25) Here we cannot hope to find whole series of books devoted to an individual family, but it is possible, at least in principle, to find useful scattered material, such as the account book of a merchant for a single year, or similar miscellaneous data, limited both in subject and time. Among the families of our interest, only five are present in the alphabetical listing at the end of the inventory, but all of them only for later times and different subjects.

**2.3.5. Raccolta Sebregondi (RS)**. It is a collection of more than 5000 items devoted to Florentine families, but includes families from the whole of Tuscany and sometimes farther away. For some families we find a few cases, but in general each family has just one file.

In the case of Arditi (RS 177) I could only find two cards corresponding to two persons of the family: Santi di Bastiano di Tommaso and Vincenzo di Antonio di Bastiano living in 1593 and 1596 respectively.

Something more has been kept about the Della Luna family (RS 3122). Most documents are from the 16th and 17th centuries, however there are full lists of the political charges covered by persons of the family and a very exhaustive family tree that also includes secondary branches and feminine members. There is also a small text, printed, on the murder in 1645 (probably due to nobody less than a Medici) of the last member of the family, Nicolò della Luna.

I have also looked in the Spannocchi case (RS 5019), but it is reported as a family from Siena that acquired the title of Count in 1824. There are lists of persons of the family that sometimes go back to the 15th century, but most information is for the 18th and 19th centuries.

It would have been relatively easy to search all of the families that we were looking for, but the problem is that any information that we can find may be at most useful to better understand the family composition at a given time, but of course we will never find here any detailed information on their trades or accounts.

**2.3.6. Archivio araldico Ceramelli Papiani (CP)**. (26) This is another rich collection for information on the Florentine families. However, its main aim is just to provide us with the family’s coat of arms. Thus, for Arditi (CP 188) we read: *D'azzurro, al braccio destro di carnagione vestito di rosso, uscente dal fianco sinistro dello scudo e impugnante in palo una clava d'oro, il tutto sormontato da un giglio dello stesso.* Allow me not to translate this into English – already in Italian, it is for me rather complex, and I am not able to see how this kind of information may be useful.

# 3. ARCHIVIO DELL’OSPEDALE DEGLI INNOCENTI (AOIF)

An indication to this archive can already be found in Esch’s book. (27) There it is however apparently taken from the quoted Tognetti’s book on Cambini, also because this archive does not appear among those quoted in the bibliography at the end of Esch’s book, where for Florence we find only *Catasto*, items 800, 804, and 834.

This is a promising hint for continuing our search. In particular, we find that AOIF has a very complete and detailed inventory available through the web. (28) Therefore, before entering the AOIF in person, I have studied its inventory and noted a few books that could be worth checking. Probably, together with Cambini’s books, the most interesting ones are the books of accounts of the Della Casa family, precisely dedicated to their trades with Rome.

## 3.1 Cambini

From an Appendix in Tognetti’s book we find the following items to search in AOIF for the time of interest.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | YEARS | LIBRI MASTRI | QUADERNI | RICORDI |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| B | 1444-1446 |  | 242 |  |
| C | 1446-1447 |  | 262 |  |
| D | 1447-1451 |  | 263 | 218 |
| E-F | 1451-1455 | 244-245 | 264-266 | 219 |
| G | 1455-1456 |  | 267 | 220 |
| I | 1457-1458 |  | 268 | 221 |
| L | 1459-1460 | 246 | 269 | 222 |
|  |  |  |  |  |

I did not search in *Libri mastri*, because I suppose that they contain mainly long lists of persons with indicated the value of the goods that they had given or taken, without specific and detailed indication of the nature of these goods. One specimen of *Quaderni* I have leafed through, and this is still of the same kind, with few indications corresponding to the goods traded. Different is the case with *Ricordi*. Here trace is kept every day of what arrives and what leaves, separately recording which these goods are, their value, and the additional expenses for taxes and for the various stages of their transport, including short travels to and from the customs.

Here I did not found any mention of playing cards, but this is the kind of register where this might be recorded. It is possible that to find cards recorded here, they should have corresponded to a remarkable shipment and not just to a few packs added to the usual clothes or wool bales. It is also possible that the Cambini did not export any playing cards. Even Sergio Tognetti, who studied these books in detail (and at a professional level), does not remember having found there any playing cards mentioned.

## 3.2 Della Casa

There are a few books of potential interest, to begin with the following two: (488)12736 (1439-1445), (489) 12737 (1445-1455). Different from other cases, these books appear to be precisely devoted to the trade with Rome.

Unfortunately, they are all of the kind of *Libri mastri* or *Quaderni*, as mentioned above for Cambini. I have leafed through the latter mentioned above, but if playing cards are mentioned somewhere in between these long lists of persons and money amounts, I have little hope to be able, at least for the moment, to retrieve the corresponding quotation.

# Conclusion

I have tried to report everything that I have studied for this research, which had been stimulated by Esch’s book with its remarkable data on imports to Rome.

I hope to convey the impression that I have searched both rather wide and deep. The situation reminds me other researches, which I too have carried out long ago. Typically, this occurs among undergraduate students: one gets the title of a dissertation, and what is required is to work on it, researching seriously for a given time interval. Fortunately for the student, it is not necessary that he discovers new and significant results, otherwise his graduation might arrive too late.

More recently, I got instead used to write not about my research, but just about the results obtained with it, if any. If I had written a report on what I have found of significant information with this particular research, a few lines of text would have been more than enough.

I hope, however, that somebody else − following one or another of the paths here outlined − may obtain the wanted results.

# NOTES

(1) Thierry Depaulis, *The Playing-Card*, Vol. 36 No. 3 (2008) 205-211.

(2) Arnold Esch, *Economia, cultura materiale ed arte nella Roma del rinascimento*. Roma nel Rinascimento, Roma 2007.

(3) <http://forum.tarothistory.com/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=743>

(4) <http://trionfi.com/triunfi-playing-cards-rome>.

(5) M. Morena, “Passatempi popolari…” pp. 427-439 in Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Ed.) *Il tempo libero: economia e società*. Le Monnier, Grassina 1995.

(6) Lodovico Zdekauer, *Il gioco d'azzardo nel Medioevo italiano; con un saggio introduttivo di Gherardo Ortalli*. Salimbeni, Firenze 1993.

(7) A. Esch, *ibidem*. p. 50.

(8) A. Esch, *ibidem*. p. 247.

(9) Franco Franceschi; Gloria Fossi, (Eds.) *La grande storia dell’artigianato. Vol. 2. Il Quattrocento*. Giunti, Firenze 1999. pp. 27-63.

(10) Hidetoshi Hoshino, *Industria tessile e commercio internazionale nella Firenze del Tardo Medioevo*. Olschki, Firenze 2001.

(11) Sergio Tognetti, *Un’industria di lusso al servizio del grande commercio*. Olschki, Firenze 2002.

(12) Richard A. Goldthwaite, *The economy of Renaissance Florence*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Md. 2009.

(13) Raymond De Roover, *The rise and decline of the Medici Bank (1397-1494)*. Harvard Univ. Press Cambridge, Mass. 1963.

(14) Philip Jacks; William Caferro, *The Spinelli of Florence: fortunes of a Renaissance merchant family*. University Park c.2001. available in large part at google-books.

(15) <http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/fedoragsearch/rest?filter=&operation=solrQuery&query=spinelli>

(16) Sergio Tognetti, *Il banco Cambini: affari e mercati di una compagnia mercantile-bancaria nella Firenze del 15.secolo*. Olshki, Firenze 1999.

(17) In: *Archivio Storico Italiano*, CLXIII (2005) pp. 87-132.

(18) Sergio Tognetti, Personal communication, December 2011.

(19) Marco Spallanzani, *La lana come materia prima*. Istituto Datini, Prato 1969.

(20) <http://trionfi.com/giovanni-da-pistoia>

(21) A further study about him is under way.

(22) *The Playing-Card*, Vol. XIX, No. 1 (1990) 7-17.

(23) <http://www.archiviodistato.firenze.it/rMap/index.html>

(24) <http://siusa.archivi.beniculturali.it/cgi-bin/pagina.pl?RicVM=indice&RicSez=prodfamiglie&RicLin=en>

(25) ASFI. Inventario N/422. *Libri di commercio e di famiglie*, edited by Vanna Arrighi, Stefano Calonaci, and Veronica Vestri. 2008, 1843 pp.

(26) <http://www.archiviodistato.firenze.it/ceramellipapiani2/index.php?page=Famiglia&id=292&PHPSESSID=38df6ipo8rhikounm11gb5e2n7>

(27) A. Esch, *ibidem*. p.309.

(28) [http://www.istitutodeglinnocenti.it/culturali /inventario.jsf](http://www.istitutodeglinnocenti.it/culturali%20/inventario.jsf)