

The Royal Game of the Ombre

Anonymous

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The Royal Game of the Ombre

Written At the Request of divers Honourable Persons—1665

Produced by Imran Ghory while at the University of Bristol

[Transcribers note: This transcription was made from a copy of the work held in the British Library as Jessel #1249. Original spelling and punctuation has been preserved where possible.]

The Royal Game of the Ombre.

Written At the Request of divers Honourable Persons.

London

Printed for Thomas Palmer, at the Crown in Westminster–Hall, 1665.

The Royal Game of the Ombre.

L'Ombre is a Spanish Game at Cards, as much as to say, The Man: so he who undertakes to play the Game, sayes Jo so l'Ombre, or, I am the Man. And 'tis a common saying with the Spaniards, (alluding to the name) that the Spanish l'Ombre as far surpasses the French le Beste, as a Man do's a Beast, There are divers sorts of it, of which, this (which we shall only treat of, and which chiefly is in vogue) is called the Renegado, for reasons better supprest then known.

How many can play at it, and with what Cards they are to play.

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There can only three play at it, and they are dealt nine Cards a piece: so by discarding the Eights, Nines, and Tens out of the Pack, there remains thirteen Cards in the Stock.

Of the Trump

There is no turning up Trump, nor no Trump but what the Player pleases, the first hand having always the choice to play or pass, after him the second, &c.

Of the Stakes

For Stakes there are two sorts of Marks or Counters, the greater and the less; for example if you value the great ones at 12. pence, the lesser may be pence the piece (and so according as you please) of which great Marks you stake each one one for the Game: and the lesser for passing, for the hand, if you be eldest, and for taking in, giving for each Card you take in, one Mark or Counter.

Of the names of the Cards, and order in ranking them

Of the Black Suits

1. The Spadillio, or Ace of Spades.
2. The Mallilio, or black Deuces of either suit.
3. The Basto, or Ace of Clubs.
4. The King.
5. Queen.
6. Knave.
7. Seven.
8. Six.
9. Five.
10. Four.
11. And Three.

Of the Red Suits

1. The Spadillio, or Ace of Spades.
2. The Mallilio, or Sevens of either Suit.
3. The Basto, or Ace of Clubs.
4. The Punto, or Ace of Hearts or Diamonds according as they are Trump.

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5. The King.
6. The Queen.
7. The Knave.
8. The Deuce.
9. The Three.
10. The Four.
11. The Five.
12. The Six.

Observations.

By this you see first that the Spadillio, or Ace of Spades is always the first Card, and always Trump, be the Trump what suit soever; and the Basto, or Ace of Clubs always the third. Secondly, the of Black, there are but eleven Trumps, and of Red twelve. Thirdly, that the Red Ace enters into the fourth place when it is Trump, and then is called the Punto, otherwise 'tis only rank'd after the Knave, and is only call'd the Ace. Fourthly, that (excepting the Deuces of Black, and Sevens of Red, which are call'd the Mallilio's, and are always the second Cards when they are Trumps) the least small Cards of the Red are always best, and the greatest of the Black.

Of the Matadors.

The Matadors or killing Cards, as the Spadillio, Mallilio, and Basto, are the three chief Cards, and for these, when they are all in a hand (else not) the others pay three of the greater Marks or Counters the piece; and though there be no counting the Matadors without these three, yet these three for foundation, you may count as many as you have Cards in an interrupted series of Trumps; for all which the others are to pay you one Mark or Counter, the piece, even to nine sometimes.

Of taking in, and the order and manner of it.

1. Who has the first Hand, has choice of playing the Game, of naming the Trump, and of taking in as many of or as few Cards as he pleases, and after him the second, &c.
2. Having once demanded whether any one will play *without taking in*, you oblige your self to take in, though your Game be never so good: wherefore you are well to consider it before.
3. If you name not the Trump before you look on the Cards which you have taken in, any other may prevent you, and name what Trump they please.
4. If (as it often happens) you know not of two Suits which to name Trump; e.g. with the two black Aces you have three Trumps of either sorts: First, the Black Suit is to be preferr'd before the Red, because there are fewer Trumps of it. Secondly, you are rather to choose that Suit of which you have not the King, because besides your three Trumps, you have a King, which is as good as a fourth.

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5. When you have the choice of Going in three Matadors, or the two Black Aces with three of four other Trumps, if the Stakes be great, you are to chuse this last, (as most likely to win most Tricks) if it be but a simple Stake, you are to chuse the first; because the six Counters you are to receive for the Matadors, more then equavales the four or five, you lose for the Game.

Observations.

1. He is to ask *if any will play without taking in.* (when they have the choice of those who will not.) Secondly, he is never to take in, or play, unless he have three sure Tricks in his hand at least: To understand which the better we must know

The End of the Game

The End of the Game is (as at Beast) to win most Tricks; whence he who can win five tricks of the Nine, has a sure Games; or if he win Four, and can so divide the Tricks, as one may win Two, the other Three: if not, 'tis either Codillio or Repuesto, and the Player loses and makes good the Stakes.

Of the Codillio.

The call it Codillio when the Player is beasted, and another wins more Tricks then he; when this takes up the Stakes, and tother makes it good: where note, that although the other two alwayes combine against the Player to make him lose, yet they all do their best (for the common good) to hinder any one from winning, onely striving to make it Repuesto.

Of the Repuesto.

They call it Repuesto when the Player wins no more Tricks then another: for example, if he win but four, another four, and the third but one, or each of them win three Tricks the piece; in which case the Player doubles the Stake, without any ones winning it, and it remains so doubled for the advantage of the next Player, &c. whence you may collect, that the Player is as much concern'd in making Repuesto, in case of nesity, as any of the rest, by which means the Stakes oftentimes increasing to a considerable summe, the Player is to be very wary what Games he playes.

What Games are to be played

One is never to play unless he have three sure Tricks in his hand at least, as we have said before; as the three Matadors, or six or seven good Trumps without them; where note, the Kings of any Suit are alwayes accounted as good as Trumps (since nothing but Trumps can win them) mean while all other Cards but them and Trumps, are to be discarded.

Observations.

He who playes having taken in, the next is to consider the goodness of his Game; and to take in more or less, according to his Game is probably like to prove good or bad, alwayed considering, that 'tis as much his advantage that the third have a good Game to make it Repuesto, as himself. Neither is any one, for Covetousness of saving a Counter or two, to neglect, the taking in, that the other may commodiously make up his Game with the Cards which he leaves; and that no good Cards may lye dormant in the Stock, except Player playe without taking in when they may refuse to take in, if they imagine he has all the Game.

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Of playing without taking in.

When one has a sure Game in his hand, he is to play without taking in; when the others are to give him each of them one of the greater Marks or Counters, as he is to give them, if he play without taking in, a Game that is not sure, he'd(?) loses it.

Of the Voll.

If you win all the Tricks in your hand, or the Voll, they likewise are to give you one Mark or Counter the piece; but then you are to declare before the fifth Trick, that you intend to play for the Voll, that so they may keep their best Cards, which else seeing you win five Tricks (or the Game) they may carelessly cast away.

Of the Forfeitures

If you Renounce, you are to double the Stake, this(?) also if you have more or fewer Cards then Nine, (to avoid all wrangling or foul play) to which end you are carefully to count your Cards both in dealing and taking in, before you look on them; besides according to the Rigour of the Game, if you speak any thing that may discover your Game, or anothers (excepting onely Gagno as we shall declare afterwards) or play so, as wittingly to hinder the making it Repueto or Codillio (and if ignorantly, you are not fit to play.)

Of playing Trumps

In playing Trump; you are to note, that if any playes an ordinary Trump, and you have onely the three best Cards, or Matadors, singly or can jointly in your hands, you may refuse to play them, without Renouncing, because of the priviledge which those Cards have, that none but commanding Cards can force them out of your hands; as for example, the Spadillio forces the Mallilio, and the Mallilio the Basto; for all the rest you are to follow Trump.

Of what you are to say

You are to say nothing but onely, *I pass*, or *play*, or Gagno, that is, 'tis mine, simply, when you play your Card, to hinder the third from taking it; or Gagno de l' Re when you play your Queen to hinder them from taking it with the King, &c. but this you cannot say till it come unto your turn.

General Rules

'Tis impossible to provide against all accident in the Game, onely these general Rules may be observ'd in playing: First, the chieftest Art consisting in knowing the goodness of ones Game, and how it may be improved to the best, one is never to win more then one trick, if they cannot win more then two because of the advantage they give the Player by it in dividing the tricks. Secondly, you are alwayes to win the trick from the Player if you can, unless you let it pass for more advantage, wherein note the second is to let pass to the third; if he have the likelier Game to beast the Player, or if he be likely to win it.

Of the Tenaces

There may be divers advantages in refusing to take the Players trick, but the cheifest is if you have Tenaces in your hands, that is, two Cards, which if you have the leading, you are sure to lose one of them. If the player lead to you, you are sure to win them both; for examples, if you have Spadillio and Basto in your hand, & he have the Mallilio & another Trump, if you lead you lose one of the; for either you lead your

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Spadillio, and he player his lesser Trump upon it and wins your Basto the next trick with his Mallilio, and so the contrary; whereas if he leads, he loses both; for if he lead his Mallilio, you take it with your Spadillio, and with your Basto win the other Trump; or if he lead with that, you take it with your Basto; and then your Spadillio wins his Mallilio, and 'tis called Tenaces, because it so catches you betwixt them, there is no avoiding it, &c.

Of the Players playing his game for his best advantage

Of this (becuase every one playes according to his own fancy) I will only say, that if you are not sure of winning five Tricks, but have only the three Matadors, (as for example) and Kings be your Auxilary Cards, if you have the leading you are to begin with a Matador or two before you play your Kings, to fetch out those Trump perhaps which might have trumped them; and if you have three Matadors with two other Trumps your best way is first to play you Matadors, to see how the Trump lie, and if both follow, you are sure that if three Trump be Red, there remains onely one Trump in their hands; if Black, none at all; it importing so much that the player counts the Trumps, as the miscounting only one, do's often lose the Game. In fine, if they have but a weak Game, they are to intimate cunning Beast Players, in dividing Tricks, and consult them in playing of their Cards. And these few Instructions may suffice, leaving the rest to each one's particular observation.

Certain other more Questions there are; as whether any may look on the Tricks to see what Cards are played beside the Ombre, or he who playes the Game, which ordinarily is resolved on the affirmative; or when any Cards are left in the Stock, whether any may look on them or no, which the Table lef once, usually is done. Only observer to lay your Tricks Angle-wisse.

[Transcribers note: Several diagrams here have been omitted], to the end that one may easily perceive whether they be two, three, or four.]

FINIS.