



Playing, Learning, Flirting: Printed Board Games from 18th- Century France

28 March – 28 October 2012

Rachel Jacobs, Curator

This exhibition of French eighteenth-century board games revealed for the first time a surprising and intriguing aspect of the collections at Waddesdon Manor. Many of the forms and principles of these early games are still familiar, illuminating their enduring qualities and the timelessness of play



1

1 Académie des jeux historiques by le Sieur L. Liger. Paris, Legras, 1718. Print, 1659. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France © BnF

2 Pierre-Louis Surugue, after Jean-Siméon Chardin, *Le Jeu de l'Oye*, 1745. Engraving. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France © BnF

People have always played games. How people play may have changed and is still changing, with new technology, but the essential idea of play as a form of recreation from the everyday life of work has always remained the same. In the *Dictionnaire des Jeu*, (1792) Jacques Lacombe attributed the rise of game playing to the court of Louis XIV, claiming that games spread from the courts to the cities and onto the provinces, soon all seemed to be playing, men, women and children alike.

The rise of printmaking allowed printed games to spread through all social classes, alongside playing cards and lottery tickets. They also offered publishers a chance to produce galleries of popular imagery. France quickly became leading producers in this field.

The subject of games was not without controversy. Some feared that games and particularly those of chance led to indolence, gambling and other vices. Others saw the appeal of play and recognized its educational potential. Changing attitudes towards childhood and education were encouraged by Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke (1632-1704) and later Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1690), Locke stated that children learned a great deal through their own activities and the experimentation and observation of play. Conversely, the Jesuits were the first to really value the board game as an educational tool which allowed children to learn by way of appealing images. These games on display reveal the moment when our modern understanding of learning was being formed. Play and images continue to be fundamental to how we teach and how we learn.

The themes and events depicted on these ephemeral works of art range from flirtation to fort-building, from biblical history to the French Revolution. They provide a fascinating insight into how people lived and played and the role of games in education and leisure. Many of the forms and principles of these early games are still familiar, illuminating their enduring qualities and the timelessness of play.



2

Most of the games in this exhibition are variants of the 'jeu de l'oie'. In English known as the Game of the Goose. It is similar to the modern Snakes and Ladders. A spiral race game played with dice and tokens. Each player is represented by an individual marker. In this game of chance, one's travel along the board depends on the roll of the dice, landing on either helpful squares, which double the player forward, or obstacles which incur punishments such as fines, missed turns or even going back to the start. The winner is the first to land on the last square and wins the tokens put into the pot throughout the game.



3

The 'jeu de l'oie' is first mentioned in London in 1597 as, 'a newe and most pleasant game of goose'. However, the game is thought to have originated in Italy. Francesco de Medici (1574-87) is said to have presented one to King Philip II of Spain (1527-98). The popularity of the game spread throughout Europe, reaching its height in 18th-century France.



4

The 'jeu de l'oie' has at times been interpreted as a metaphor for life. The journey on the board mirrors ones own path through life's obstacles. In French, board games are often called 'Jeux de Société' which puts emphasis on the social nature of the experience.



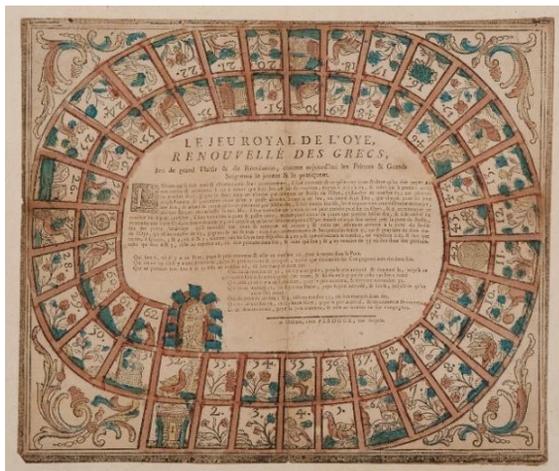
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Although many of the examples on display are richly decorated and beautifully preserved, many show signs of wear and use. Ferdinand de Rothschild (1838-98) who built Waddesdon Manor, collected these games as works of art. He was fascinated by objects that evoked the everyday lives of people. He kept the games in two leather portfolios in his most private of room, the Tower Drawing Room.

3 Detail from *The Royal Goose Game, Revived from the Greeks.*

4 Detail from *Goose Game with a Poem starting 'From a Door Lots of Pilgrims Left'.*

5 Detail from *Game of Henri IV*



© Waddesdon Manor, The National Trust. Photo: Mike Fear

This is a traditional *jeu de l'oie* (*Game of the goose*). Unlike the many variations, this example is very close to what we believe to be the game's original format. The earliest known 'jeu de l'oie' on paper dates from 1597 to 1601 published in Lyon and is currently in Germany. Even though this one is almost 200 years later it is very similar in iconography and bears the same title. The classic nature of the game was created by this stability in design and reinforced by the claim that it originated from the Greeks. The association with antiquity was not wholly believed at the time but it was used to elevate the game and, by implication, glorified France as the nation that revived it in modern times.

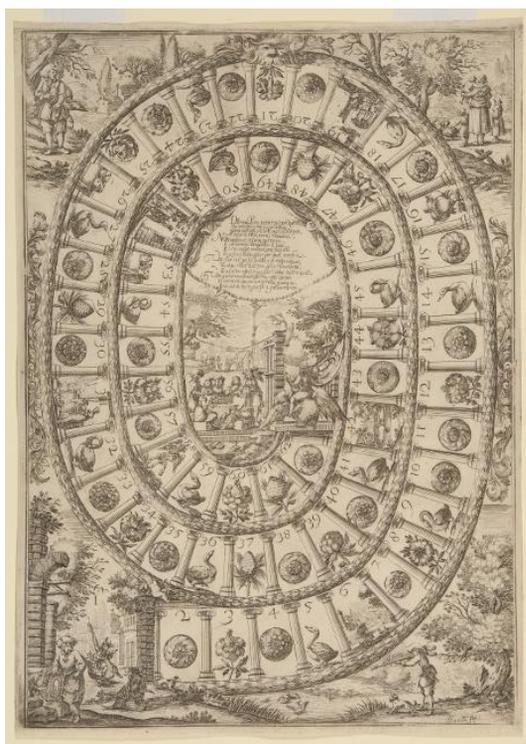
The Royal Goose Game, Revived from the Greeks (Le Jeu Royal de L'Oye, Renouvelle des Grecs)

c. 1787

published by Perdoux (active c. 1787),
Orléans

woodcut and letterpress on paper, hand-
coloured in bodycolour with the pochoir

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild
Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)



© Waddesdon Manor, The National Trust. Photo: Mike Fear

Goose Game with a Poem starting 'From a Door Lots of Pilgrims Left'

c. 1650

attributed to Valerio Spada (b. 1613, d. 1688),
Florence, Italy

etching and engraving

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild
Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)



This Italian game is the oldest in the exhibition. The traditional Game of the Goose is thought to have originated in Italy and the vertical format is characteristic of early Italian examples. The pictorial imagery and the verse explain 'why' and 'how' the game is played. In the centre of the course a family is depicted playing the game together. The poem likens the game to a pilgrimage. All players enter through a single gate but do not travel together. They encounter perils along the way and only one pilgrim will reach salvation. The pilgrim is visualised as a man riding a giant goose, appearing at the beginning and again at the end, with his back to the players, entering through the gate.



© Waddesdon Manor, The National Trust. Photo: Mike Fear

The Game of Good Children (Le Jeu de bons Enfants: Vivans sans soucy ni chagrin)

1760 -80

published and possibly engraved by Jacques-Simon Chereau, (1732-1786), Paris

engraving, hand-coloured in watercolour

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This unusual variation of the Game of the Goose is likely to refer to the 'enfants sans soucy', a comedy troupe (originating in the 15th century) known for farcical, crude performances. This tone is reflected in the use of bold colours and coarsely-drawn figures. The death space shows the burial of a wife, while other squares illustrate a happy and an unhappy cuckold (*cornard*). The *Game of Good Children* gives players the chance to masquerade in distinctly unrefined roles, reliving the popular humour encountered at fairs at the time. Around the edge of the sheet are the paraphernalia used to play this game, such as the dice, dice shakers, tokens and token purse.



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Historical Games of the Kings of France, Famous Queens, Geography and Metamorphoses

(Jeux Historiques des Rois de France, Reines Renomees, Geographie et Metamorphose)

by Jean Desmarets de Saint Sorlin (1595-1676), engravings by Stefano Della Bella (1610-1664)

Paris, 1698, (first published 1644-45)

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This collection of the first French didactic playing cards was commissioned by Cardinal Mazarin (1602-1661). They were intended to teach the young Louis XIV, history, geography and mythology. The book contains four decks of cards, with illustrations and accompanying text of the kings of France, famous queens, geography and mythology



Photo © Christie's Images / The Bridgeman Art Library

Games Table

1764

Guillaume Kemp (active 1757-86, master 1764)

ormolu-mounted tulipwood, amaranth, sycamore and cube-parquetry

on loan from The Most Hon. The Marquess of Bath, Longleat House, Warminster, Wiltshire



Photo © Christie's Images / The Bridgeman Art Library

This games table contains seven sliding boards to which are pasted printed board games and two types of chess boards. These include *The Game of Fortifications* and the *Game of a Voyage Around the World, Via the Principal Town*, other examples of which are displayed in the exhibition. The table also includes the game of tric trac, a form of backgammon. On the top of the table is a roulette circlet.



© Waddesdon Manor, The National Trust. Photo: Mike Fear

New Game of the Theatre of Melpomene, Momus and Thalia (Nouveau Jeu des Theatres de Melpomene, Momus et Thalie)

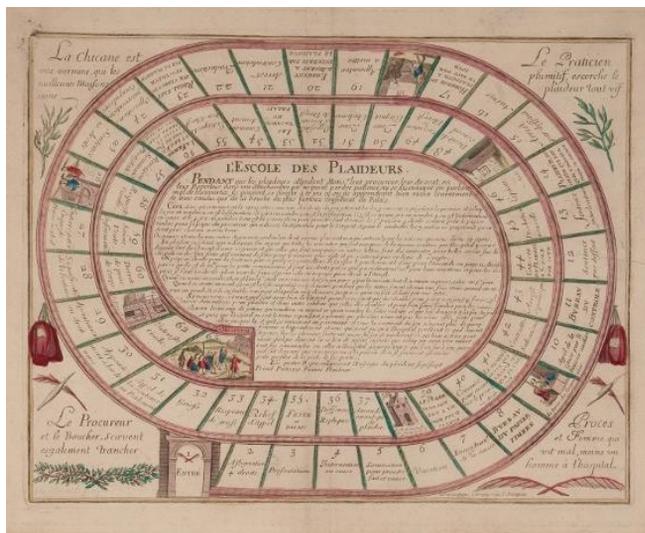
c 1811

published by Paul André Basset (active 1785-1815), Paris

etching and engraving, hand-coloured in watercolour and bodycolour

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This game is rooted in the public fascination with the theatre and its stars – not unlike our modern celebrity culture. Each square depicts an actor, in a specific role, at a named theatre. Many actors appear several times such as Mr Brunet shown playing 16 different roles. These images recall the theatrical albums, published annually, that showed famous actors in the costumes and postures of the roles with which they were particularly associated. Melpomene and Thalia were the Greek muses of Tragedy and Comedy, Momus the Greek god of satire and mockery. In Greek mythology, Momus was exiled from Mount Oympos because the gods disliked his constant criticism, but, through the works of Molière (1622-1673) and Voltaire (1694-1778), satire achieved a prominent place in French theatre.



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Game of the College of Litigants (L'Ecole des Plaideurs)

c. 1685

designed by Curé de Moüy Hamel (active c. 1690-1700) published by Jean Crépy père (b.c 1660, d.c 1739), Paris

engraving, hand-coloured in watercolour and bodycolour

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)



This variant of the Game of the Goose satirises the judicial process and the bureaucracy encountered in minor court claims. The game is presented as an educational and amusing activity while waiting in the ante-chamber for one's lawyer. Jean Racine (1639-1699) had explored this theme in his play *Les Plaideurs* (1668). With bitter wit, this game lacks beneficial squares which would allow the player to move forward by doubling their dice roll. Players can only contemplate despair and destitution, finishing at the workhouse, although they are warned that they may give up before they reach the end.



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The New Game of French Fashion (Le Nouveau Jeu des Modes Françoises)

c. 1780

published by Robert Sayer (b.c 1724, d.1794) & John Smith (b.c 1751, d.1812), London

etching, stipple engraving and engraving on paper, hand-coloured in watercolour and bodycolour

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This game about French fashions and hairstyles was printed in London. France had been the international leader of fashion since the reign of Louis XIV. In 1661 the English writer John Evelyn remarked that 'La Mode de France [French fashion] is one of the best returns they make, and feeds as many bellies as it clothes backs'.

This game illustrates the latest French fashions and satirizes an abundance of trends and manners. Some of the squares seem quite brazen, for example space 59 depicting 'the Beautiful Leg.' Whoever lands on it must pay 4 tokens for the pleasure of contemplating the lovely nymph's leg and must start the game all over again. Space 50 requires the player to stop and talk to a female until another comes along to release him or her from this labour. These penalties mock feminine frivolity, French excess and the interactions between men and women.

All the games in the exhibition have been conserved and remounted. In the case of this game, the 19th century mount has also been restored in order to show how these games would have been appreciated by Baron Ferdinand. This restoration gives us a chance to understand how the objects have changed throughout their existence. From being played and used, to being regarded as works of art and social documents, mounted and kept in portfolios to being conserved and displayed in an exhibition.



© Waddesdon Manor, The National Trust. Photo: Mike Fear

New Game of Thieving (Jeu de la Maraude)

1780-1800

published by Jean-Baptiste Crépy (active c. 1753-1790), Paris

etching and engraving on paper, hand-coloured in watercolour and bodycolour

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This unusual game combines trick-taking and stakes from a card game along with tokens and the track of a race game. The track consists of 32 spaces, corresponding to the 32 cards of the standard French piquet pack. Each player begins with two tokens and draws a card from the deck. Each player places a token on the corresponding space and leaves one slightly above. The aim of the game is for the 'running' token to be reunited with the 'still token'. Players move about the track according to the cards they hold and the stakes they win. The imagery in the four corners relates to thieving and raiding; a figure with wings, blindfolded and with ass's ears, carrying a bag of money; Mercury flying with a moneybag; a man carrying a game bird on a gun slung over his shoulder; and a man assaulting a women wearing a tall hat and a cross round her neck.



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New Game of Women's Fashion and Hairstyles (Le Nouveau Jeu du Costume et des Coiffures des Dames dedie au Beau Sexe)

1779

published by Jean-Baptiste Crépy (active c. 1753-1790), after Claude-Louis Desrais (b.1746, d.1816)

etching and engraving on paper

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

The game's victorious final square 'La Belle Poule' commemorates a French and English naval battle in 1778, in which both parties claimed victory. 'La Belle Poule' (Beautiful Chicken), a French ship which played a central role in the battle caught the public imagination. It inspired prints, works of art and even a fashionable hairstyle. Here we can see how consumer products of the 18th century maintained the public interest by referring to current affairs. The beautiful chicken may also carry a second meaning as the word 'Poule' was also used in many games to mean the pot of tokens given to the winner. This visually appealing game is not without moral intent. Landing on the flamboyant Cornucopia hairstyle (square 59) incurs a penalty - a payment of 4 counters and a retreat to square 33, where the Young Amazon is equipped with the appropriate outdoor hunting attire, much like the depictions in the four corners.



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*Instructive Game of the Fables of Fontaine
(Jeu Instructif des Fables de la Fontaine)*

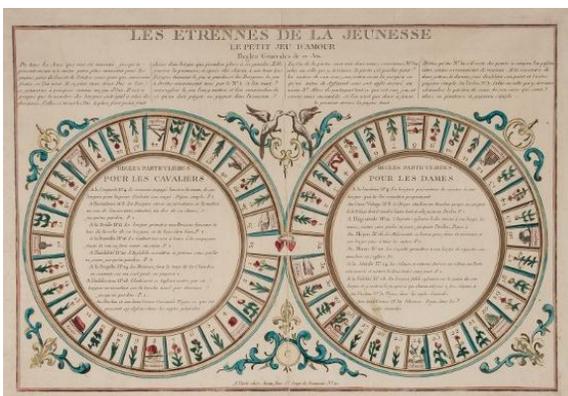
c. 1780

published by Paul André Basset (1785-1815),
Paris

etching and engraving on paper, hand-
coloured in watercolour and bodycolour

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild
Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

The *Fables* of Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695), used stories about animals to teach moral lessons to children. In his dedication to the Dauphin, de La Fontaine justifies this type of learning by stating that it allows learning all that a prince needs to know without pain but rather with pleasure. In this game each square illustrates a scene from La Fontaine's *Fables*. The winner of the game is the first to reach the bust of La Fontaine, which is accompanied by his classical counterpart, Aesop (to whom de La Fontaine himself paid tribute). The visual appeal of the game helped to make learning fun, as the enticing animal world of La Fontaine's stories made it easier to understand their moral messages.



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*The Gifts of Youth, The Little Game of
Love (Les Epreuves de la Jeunesse: Le Petit
Jeu d'amour)*

c. 1805

published by Pierre Jean (active c. 1783-1825),
Paris

etching and engraving on paper, hand-
colouring in bodycolour

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild
Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)



This variance on the Game of the Goose shows how the ideas explored in the allegorical maps are reflected in new games involving both sexes. Here we find a game in which young men and women are encouraged to play together and explore the gifts of youth through play. Each have their respective circles; each person is partnered up with a member of the opposite sex. This is a participatory game, not only does the marker encounter setbacks and helpful spaces on the board but the rules stipulate that the partners must act out punishments on each other, such as a woman tying her partner to his chair with her garter. The game's rules state that never before has there been a game that has provided so much joy and pleasure to youth.



© Waddesdon Manor, The National Trust. Photo: Mike Fear

Fantastical Map of the Empire of the Heart (L'Empire du Coeur)

c. 1750

published by Longchamps et Janvier (active c. 1746-1776), Paris

etching and engraving

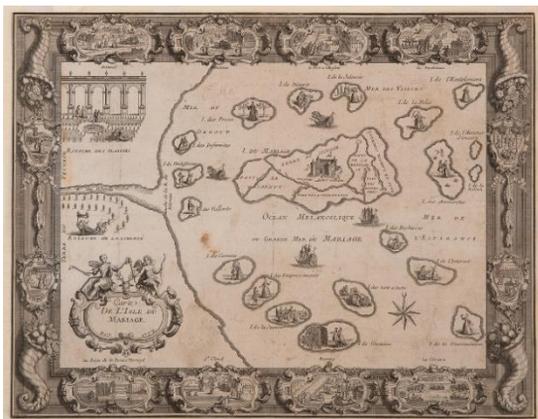
Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild
Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This is an allegorical map of Love, here depicted as the 'Empire of the Heart'. Beyond the manicured gardens where male and female figures are shown together, is a treacherous landscape into which they will venture. The paths lead towards two temples representing true and false love. Beyond these temples are the ever more treacherous 'Terres Inconnues' (Unknown Lands) and 'Mer Dangereuse' (Dangerous Sea). This map recalls one of most popular allegorical maps of the time, by the writer and salon-hostess Mademoiselle de Scudery, who devised the *Carte de Tendre* with her friends. Discussions on friendship and relationships led to the development of the idea of the land of Love (Tendre), with de Scudery as its monarch and her friends moving throughout the allegorical landscape with the aim of becoming citizens of the country.



La Carte du pays de Tendre from Madeleine de Scudéry's novel *Clélie* (1654). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France © BnF

This allegorical map offered a visual mindscape where ideas and ideals could be reflected upon and discussed, projecting oneself onto these unknown lands and new experiences. Negotiating relationships, encounters and accepted behaviors between members of the opposite sex. These new mindscapes coincided with the rise in the interest in cartography and the mapping of new lands.



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Unlike the 'Empire of the Heart', with its far reaching unknown lands and dangerous seas, this map of the Island of Marriage reveals a contained environment. The journey leads by river from the 'Virgin Lands' through the 'Kingdom of Freedom' and the 'Kingdom of Pleasures' out into the 'Ocean of Melancholy' or the 'Grand Sea of Marriage.' The central island representing marriage is split into domains that include 'Lands of Courage', 'Boredom' and 'Dependence'. On the outskirts, the 'Land of Conjugal Love', is bordered by 'Suspicion'. Around the Island of Marriage are smaller islands invoking the progress of a romantic relationship, beginning with the first encounters, 'Island of Occasion', then the 'Island of Madness' and finally 'Divorce' and 'Old Age'. The border of the map is decorated with pleasure gardens and country retreats where encounters might be made that could lead to such a journey.

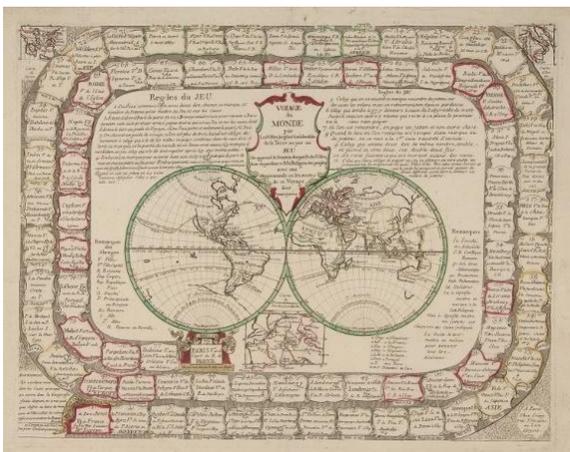
Map of the Island of Marriage (Carte de L'isle du Mariage),

1732

engraved by Gérard-Jean-Baptiste Scotin II (b. 1698, d. after 1745), Paris

etching and engraving

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)



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The engraved text on this geographical variant of the Game of the Goose recommends the player to 'learn the situation of countries and cities, their dependence, the religion of the people with a Mappemonde.' There is a world map in the centre (separated into two spheres). Other maps include central Europe and, in the top corners, Greece and Italy, which, as the home of classical antiquity, were essential to the education of a gentleman. In this game one of the players must take the role of guide, reading out information on each place as the markers are moved around the board. In writing about travel the Jesuit heraldist, Claude-François Ménéstrier (1651-1705) wrote that ignorance and prejudice hamper fruitful travel. This game aims to remove these obstacles.

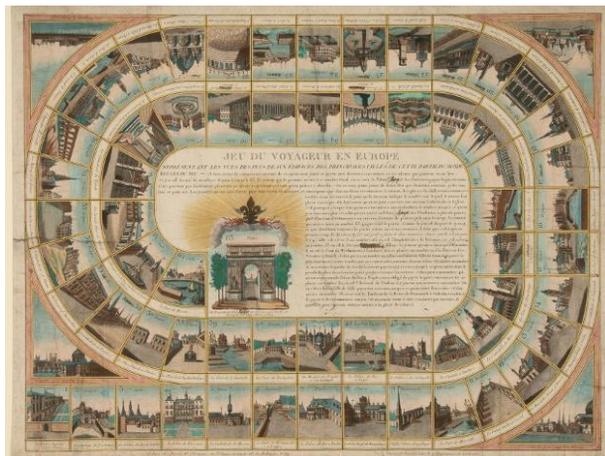
Game of a Voyage Around the World, Via the Principal Towns (Voilage du Monde par les Villes les plus Considerables de la Terre ou par un jeu)

1718

Published by Jean Crépy père (b.c 1660, d.c 1739), Paris

engraving on paper, hand-coloured in bodycolour

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© Waddesdon Manor, The National Trust. Photo: Mike Fear

Game of a Traveler in Europe (Jeu du voyageur en Europe),

c. 1813, c. 1820 [later additions]

published by Paul André Basset (active 1785-1815), Paris

etching and engraving on paper, hand-coloured in watercolour and bodycolour

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This travel game begins in France, moves through Europe and ends back in Paris at the Arc de Triomphe. It reflects changes in political power during the early 19th century, leading up to the Restoration of the French monarchy. Someone has written on the sheet in ink, removing references to the French Revolution and to Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821). On the Arc de Triomphe, fleurs-de-lis (the symbol of the Bourbon monarchy) cover up an angel and an imperial crown. The triumphal arch had been commissioned by Napoleon in 1806, but construction was halted by the Restoration of Louis XVIII (1755-1824) and only resumed in 1833 and 1836, during the reign of King-Louis Philippe (1773-1850). This game and its manuscript amendments highlight the importance of the Napoleonic symbol and how meaning was adapted to changing circumstances even in moments of play.



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The New Game of Geography of Nations (Le Nouveau Jeu de Géographie des Nations)

1675

Charles-Francois-Henry Desmartins (active c. 1675), engraved by Pierre Brissart (d.1682), published by Alexis-Hubert Jaillot (b. c.1632, d.1712)

etching and engraving

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)



This game about Europe combines maps of the individual countries as well as personifications of their perceived national characteristics. Since this is a French game, France occupies the centre and is exempt from humorous characterisation. The rules are not included on the game itself but we know that it was to be played with two sorts of dice. The publisher, Alexis-Hubert Jaillot, was also a sculptor and cartographer. He produced the *L'Atlas Nouveau* in 1681, which led to him being named Geographer to the King in 1686.



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Didactic Diagram of the Platonic Model of the Elements (Veritable Representation des Premeieres Matieres ou Elemenets)

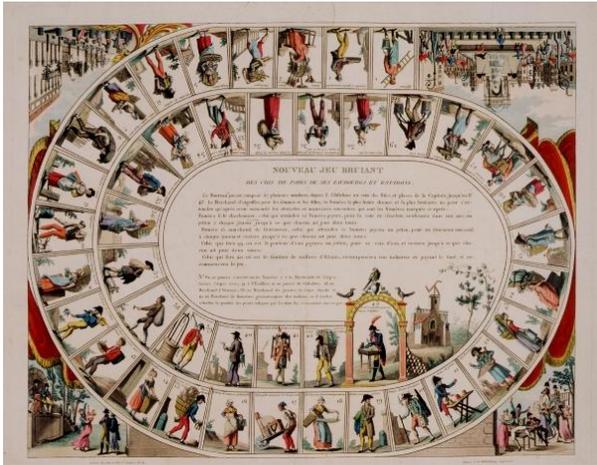
c. 1630

published by Ambrose Schevenhuyse (active c. 1630), designed by ADW (active c. 1600), Haarlem, Netherlands

engraving

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

Although this print is not a game, Baron Ferdinand included it in his collection of games. The title is given in both French and Dutch. As the word 'didactic' in the title suggests, it was intended as an educational tool and teaches the Platonic model of the universe. The Greek philosopher Plato (c. 427-348 BC) believed that the earth was a sphere at the centre of the universe, which was in turn divided into other spheres, made up of the Four Elements (earth, air, fire and water). In this print we see mankind's industrious use of the elements, including windmills, and miners digging into its centre. The miners are unaware that they are close to the flames and demons of the inferno at the core. The fifth ring offers a cartographical vision of the world. This illustrates the varied understandings and perspectives involved in explaining the workings of the universe.



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*New Noisy Game of the Street Cries of Paris
(Nouveau Jeu Bruyant des Cris de Paris de ses
Faubourgs et ses Environs)*

c. 1808

published by Paul André Basset (active 1785-
1815), Paris

etching and engraving on paper, hand-
coloured in watercolour and bodycolour

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild
Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This popular game draws on an iconographical tradition, which was shared throughout Europe for over 300 years. ‘Cries’ were sung by street traders in order to advertise and sell their wares from the Middle Ages up to the First World War. Representations of these merchants and their street cries were common in prints, drawings, paintings, poetry, literature and theatre. The images capture an aspect of urban living, and reflect the ancient connection between work and song. The game starts with the poster-seller and ends with the loudest of the criers, a seller of women's hair decorations. The cries of the different street sellers would have been familiar to players and may even have been sung aloud as part of the game.



© Waddesdon Manor, The National Trust. Photo: Mike Fear

*The New Game of Human Life (Le Nouveau
Jeu de La Vie Humaine)*

c. 1779

published by Jean Baptiste Crépy (active c.
1753-1790, d. 1796), Paris

etching and engraving

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild
Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This game exemplifies new ideas about the virtuous life. The figure depicted in the final space is the great writer and thinker Voltaire (1694-1778). In the centre of the sheet, the rules of the game explain that status based on talent and merit over a career of 84 years earned him immortality. The four corners show the Ages of Man. The sequential spaces contain further images of the Ages of Man as well as different character-types and professions, such as the poet and the philosopher. Unlike the *New Noisy Game of the Street Cries*, this game emphasises the value of work associated with thought and education, such as the orator and the historian. In depicting the stages of development from childhood to adolescence, square 6, le Badin, shows a boy building a house of cards, after the paintings of the same title by Chardin.



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The Game of the Constitution (Le Jeu de la Constitution)

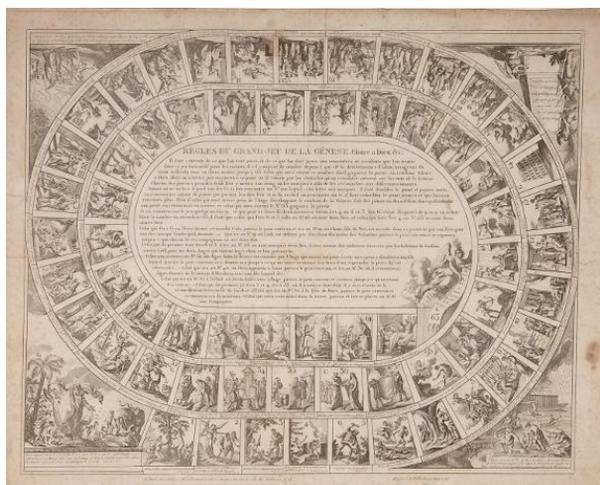
c. 1721

Unknown maker

etching and engraving on paper, hand-coloured in watercolour and bodycolour

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This political version of the Game of the Goose was designed as propaganda during one of the most significant religious controversies of the eighteenth century. It expresses criticism of the papal bull, "Unigenitus", Pope Clement XI's decree condemning Jansenism in 1713. Followers of Cornelius Jansen (1585-1638) believed in the doctrine of predestination which taught that some people were pre-selected by God for salvation. Although it was popular with many churchman and nobles, the Pope and Louis XIV considered it a dangerous heresy, as it seemed to do away with free will. The papal bull marked the beginning of the end for Jansenism in France and it was finally suppressed in 1757. Square number 58, traditionally associated with death, sent the player back to the beginning of the game. Here, it depicts the skeleton of Pope Clement XI, who died in 1721.



© Waddesdon Manor, The National Trust. Photo: Mike Fear

The Game of Genesis (Le Jeu de Genese)

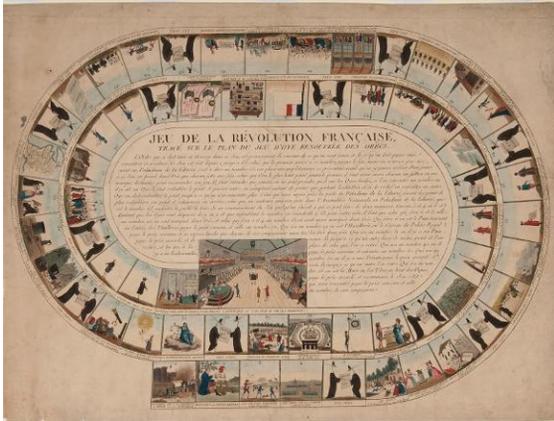
1810

published by Paul André Basset Paris (active 1785-1815), Paris

etching and engraving

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

The game depicts the major events in the biblical Book of Genesis. The first square shows the exile of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and square 63 the death of Joseph. The scenes in the four corners are: the creation of the world, the creation of Adam and Eve and the creatures of the earth, Noah's Ark, and Lot and his daughters escaping the burning city of Sodom. The rules of the game state that the first player to reach the final square wins the game and also brings Glory to God.



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Game of the French Revolution (Jeu de la Revolution Francaise)

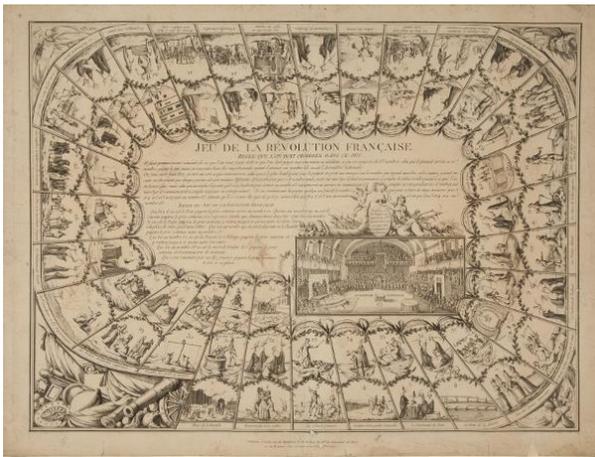
c. 1790

Unknown maker, Paris

etching and engraving, hand-coloured in watercolour and bodycolour

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This game and the one displayed below it are variations on the Game of the Goose. The sequential squares tell the story of the Revolution from the storming of the Bastille to the formation of the National Assembly (1789). The National Assembly is also here named the 'Palladium of Liberty', quoting a line from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Considerations on the Government of Poland* (1771-72), in chapter 7 about how to maintain the constitution. The game depicts events, symbols and caricatures of individuals, in a unified narrative. The beneficial goose squares which allow the players to double their dice number and move forward, are described in the rules as 'Oyes bridez' (nincompoops). The geese represent the 13 Parliaments.



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The Game of the French Revolution (Jeu de la Revolution Francaise)

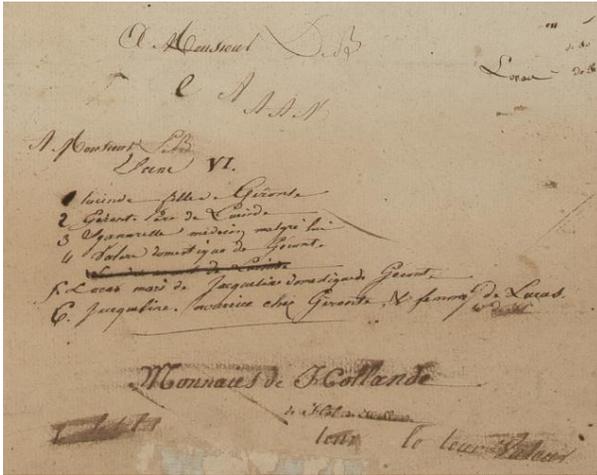
1791

Unknown maker, Paris

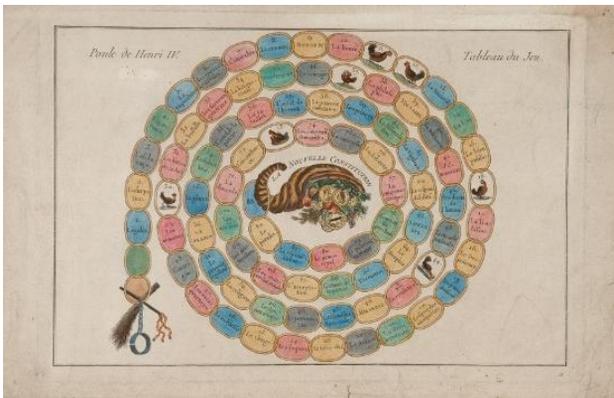
etching and engraving

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This game depicts an optimistic moment during the French Revolution. The final square declares that 'The happiness of France is signed on the September 14, 1791 by Louis XVI, first constitutional king of France.' On the back of the game, (illustrated here) we see evidence of a prior owner of the game practising his/ her penmanship. The manuscript inscription includes repetitions of the words, 'Monnais de Hollande' and the letter 'A'. Also included are the names of characters in Molière's play, *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*, a fare about a drunken man who is made to play the role of a doctor, first performed in 1666. Molière's popularity reached new heights at the beginning of the 19th century. The inscription evokes how even the back of the game was used, in this instance, as a valuable piece of blank paper and invokes a taste for reading, or perhaps amateur theatricals.



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Game of Henri IV's Chicken Taken from the Jacques Lacombe's 'Dictionnaire des Jeux' of 1792 (Poule de Henri IV Tableau du Jeu)

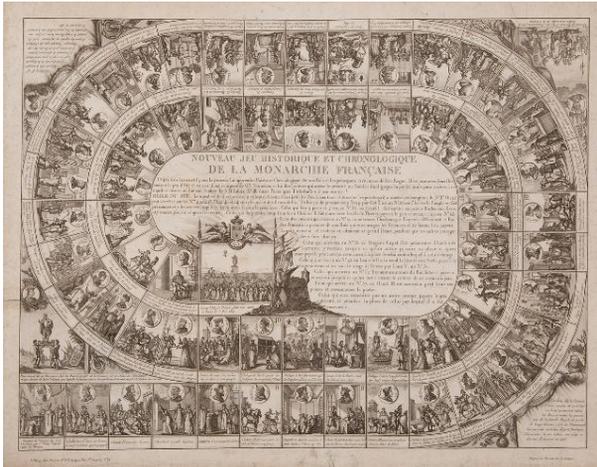
c. 1792

Unknown maker

etching and engraving on paper, hand-coloured in bodycolour

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This print of the game 'Henri IV's chicken' was taken from the *Dictionnaire de Jeux*, 1792 by Jacques Lacombe. The plate number 14 has been erased - presumably so that it could have been sold separately. Henri IV (1553-1610) was revered as the good king and famously declared: 'If God spares me, I will ensure that there is no working man in my kingdom who does not have the means to have a chicken in the pot every Sunday'. The game promotes revolutionary ideals by making Voltaire, Rousseau and Mirabeau illustrate beneficial squares. Landing on squares illustrating the nobility sends the player back to the beginning. This game may have served as propaganda for the constitutional monarchy of 1791, by associating it with the benevolence of Henri IV.



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New Historical and Chronological Game of the French Monarchy (Nouveau Jeu Historique et Chronologique de la Monarchie Francaise)

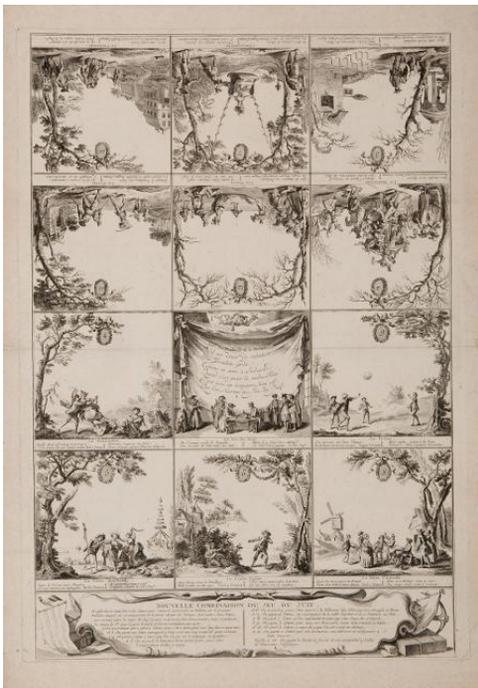
c. 1815

published by Paul André Basset (active 1785-181?), Paris

etching and engraving

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This game celebrates the Restoration of the Bourbon monarchy. After the fall of Napoleon, Louis XVIII (the brother of Louis XVI, who had been executed during the Revolution), returned from exile to form a Constitutional Monarchy (1814-1824). The Victorious final square illustrates Louis XVIII – 'le désirée' (the desired) - entering Paris on May 3, 1814. The game emphasises the restored monarchy's continuity with the past and its centrality to the history of France. Each square depicts a king of France, beginning with Clovis I (c. 466-511). The educational theme of this game, designed to help players learn the history of the French crown, is amplified in square 62. Louis XVI is shown in captivity, teaching his young son (the future Louis XVII, who died in prison in 1795, aged 10).



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New Version of the Game of the Jew (Nouvelle Combinaison du jeu du juif)

c. 1780

Unknown maker, Paris

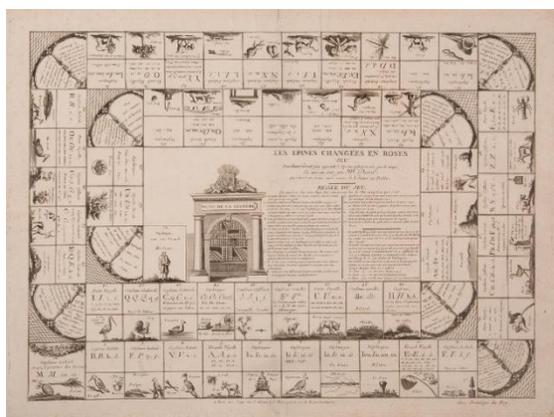
etching and engraving on paper

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)



The Game of the Jew was a popular variant of the Game of Seven, a stakes game played with two dice. The aim is to win the stakes placed by the other players. The number 7 appears in the centre, usually occupied by an anti-Semitic stereotype of a Jew, often counting his money. The verse translates as: 'How sweet it is to seduce/ A pretty Israelite girl!/ It's such a lively feeling/ When one plays the Game of the Jew!'

The squares are occupied with images of adults playing games, including the not so innocent 'Le Cache Cache' and 'La Main Chaude' (a game involving guessing who has touched or slapped you, without looking). These playful images may have rendered the game less offensive to Baron Ferdinand, who was, after all, Jewish himself. The squares may depict adults playing childhood games but the stakes involved along with the song reflect a more subversive activity between the players.



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Game of Thorns Turned into Roses (Les Epines Changées en Roses)

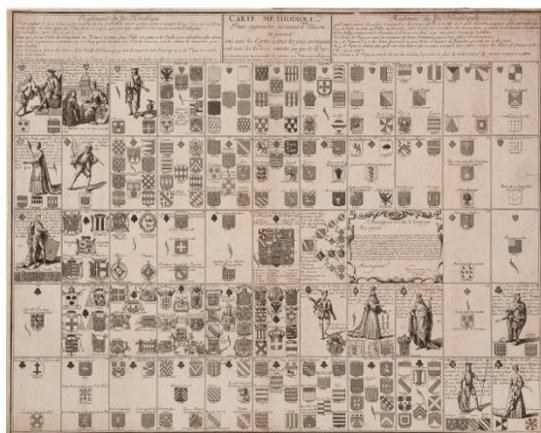
c. 1773

designed by Mademoiselle Duteil (active c. 1773), published by Jean-Baptiste Crépy (active c. 1753-1790, d. 1796), Paris

etching and engraving on paper

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

The title of this game is a metaphor for the tension between the struggle of learning to read and the great pleasure that results from it. Each square is divided into two parts with letters above and images below, intended to teach proper pronunciation and reading. The title claims that this game would teach children to read very quickly. Children still use illustrated alphabets like this today. The game would have been played under the supervision of someone literate, who would sound out the pronunciation and guide the players towards the Palace of Reading in the final space. The temple is filled with books, whose knowledge is revealed to readers, once the thorns are turned into roses.



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Game for Learning Heraldry (Carte Methodique pour apprendre aisement le Blason)

c. 1700

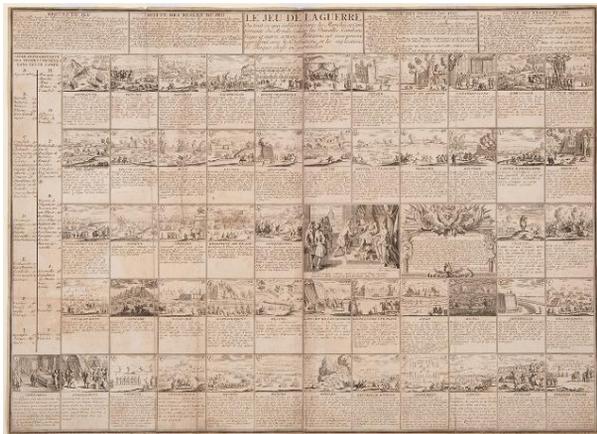
published by Jean Mariette (b.1660, d.1742), Paris

etching and engraving on paper

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)



This game is aimed at aristocrats and teaches heraldry. It is dedicated to the Duc de Bourgogne (1682-1712) and signed by its maker Silvestre. The text explains the history and importance of learning heraldry. The first square - the King of Hearts - explains; ' Armour is a mark of honour and distinction for the nobility as recompense for military exploits...' In 1696, just a few years before this game was created, Louis XIV issued an edict calling for all those who held heraldic arms to register them with the payment of 20 livres.



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The Game of War (Le Jeu de la Guerre)

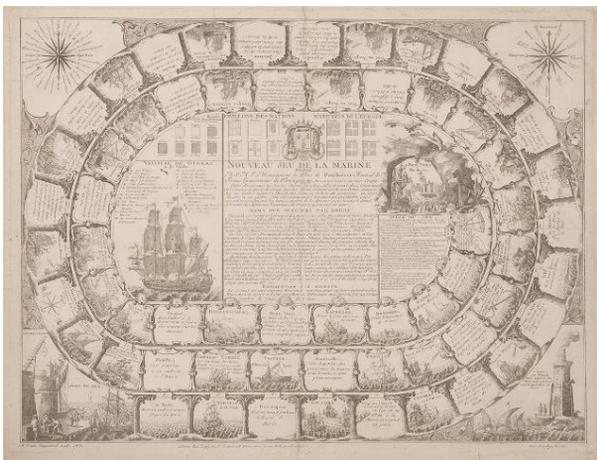
c. 1698

designed by Gilles de la Boissière (active c. 1697), engraved by Pierre Le Pautre (1652-1716), Paris

engraving on paper

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This is an instructive game teaching new techniques in warfare developed under Louis XIV in the 1690s. Like the *Game of Fortifications*, it can be played either as a *jeu de l'oie*, with dice, or as a card game, in which each square could be cut out to form a deck of cards. The Jesuit Claude-François Ménéstrier (1631-1705) wrote about the use of games as learning tools. He stated that board games were better for teaching as all the squares were visible and thus the information provided could be taken in by all the players whilst playing. The dedication to the Duc de Bourgogne (1682-1712) explains that this game was well suited to the nobility and insists on its serious nature, emphasising its pictorial accuracy.



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New Game of the Navy (Le Nouveau Jeu de la Marine)

1768

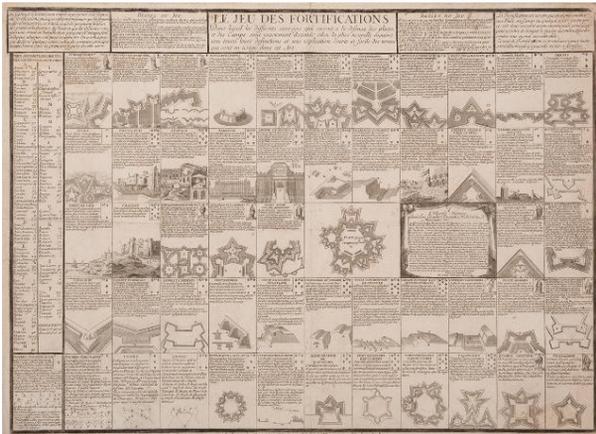
engraved by M Jeanne Chapoulaud (active c. 1768), published by Jean-Baptiste Crépy (active c. 1753-1790, d. 1796), Paris

etching and engraving on paper

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)



This game is loaded with information. Individual squares describe and illustrate different types of vessels, manoeuvres and battle tactics. At the top and in the middle of the game there are flags of the maritime nations of Europe and their heraldic colours. The diagram of a ship is accompanied by a hierarchical list of naval offices. The dedication to the Duc de Penthièvre (Admiral of France, Governor of Brittany (1725-1793)) states that it is this next generation that will sustain the state in the interest of its prince. The tone is educational and patriotic and bore particular significance after the humiliating French naval defeats of the Seven Years' War.



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The Game of Fortifications (Le Jeu des Fortifications)

c. 1751

designed by Gilles de la Boissière (active c. 1697), published by Jean-François Daumont (active 1746-1775), Paris

engraving

Waddesdon Manor, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)

This game is dedicated to the students of the prestigious military academy, the École Royale Militaire, founded by Louis XV in 1751 and open only to the nobility. It intended to teach the building of modern fortifications with fundamentals of geometry as the basis for the learning. The traditional death space which forces a player to restart the game is square 40, the 'ancient castle', indicating the need to go back to the beginning to re-learn the principles of modern fortifications. In the dedication, the editor Daumont appeals directly to the noble students of the school, in order to sell his game as an important educational tool.