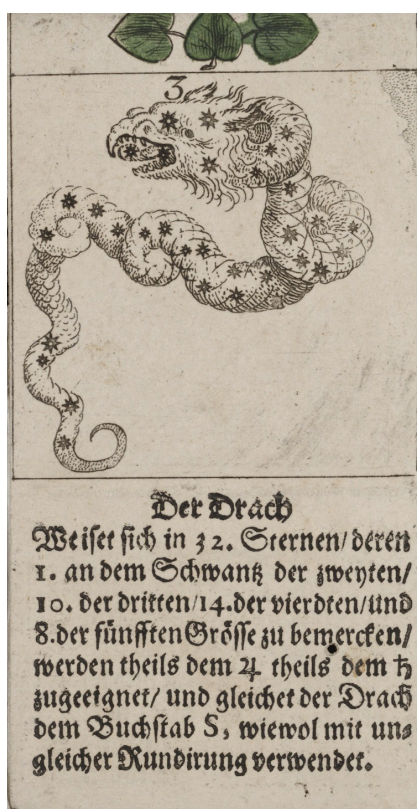


The first set of astronomical playing cards was published in Nuremberg in 1656 and was based on Johann Bayer's *Uranometria* of 1603. It was designed by the writer and lawyer, Georg Philipp Harsdörffer (1607-1658) and the cards measure about 55 x 105 mm. This very rare pack consists of a title card, with a chart of the celestial hemispheres, and fifty-two playing cards having acorns, bells, hearts and leaves as suit marks. The court cards feature the signs of the zodiac and the constellations are depicted on the rest, with descriptive text printed from type beneath.



beinecke.library.yale.edu

The cards were later reissued and they were also copied (see 1719). A complete set in Yale's Beinecke Library is accompanied by a sixty page booklet with a letterpress title-page dated 1674: *Das Astronomische kartenspiel*. Another undated one, at Sotheby's London salerooms in May 2012, had the head panels containing the suit marks removed, to produce a set of educational cards measuring 56 x 97 mm.

*Die Astronomische spielkarten.* Nuremberg, Wolfgang M. Endter, 1656; Wolfgang M. Endter & Johann A. Seel's heirs, 1674.