Art and Architecture
From the middle of the eighteenth century, with the growth of travel at home and abroad and the increase in leisure for the wealthier classes, the arts became the subject of more widespread appreciation and discussion. The rapid expansion of book and periodical publishing in this area both reflected and encouraged interest in art and art history among the wider reading public. This series throws light on the development of visual culture and aesthetics. It covers topics from the Grand Tour to the great exhibitions of the nineteenth century, and includes art criticism and biography.

Researches into the History of Playing Cards
The literary scholar Samuel Weller Singer (1783–1858) was largely self-taught, but his enthusiasm for reading caused him to open a bookshop, and he developed a wide circle of bibliomaniac friends, including Francis Douce (who later left him enough money to retire from writing for a living). He was an editor of many early modern poets, and his editions of John Selden’s Table-Talk and Joseph Spence’s Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters, of Books and Men are also reissued in this series. This highly illustrated 1816 work, originally published in a run of only 250 copies, was praised for its quality by Thomas Frognall Dibdin. In it, Singer argues that the increasing sophistication sought by the buyers of playing cards led to increasing improvements in the art of wood engraving, and that the study of these humble and rarely surviving artefacts can give insights into the achievements of the greatest Renaissance carvers.
Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

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Reseaches into the History of Playing Cards

With Illustrations of the Origin of Printing and Engraving on Wood

Samuel Weller Singer
1816.

FOR R. BERNETT, TRINITY-PLACE, N. 33. OLD BOND STREET.

PRINTED BY E. BESELYER AND SON.

LONDON.

By SAMUEL WELLER SINGER.

ENGRAVING ON WOOD.

AND

Origin of Playing Cards,

With Illustrations.

Researches Into the History of Playing Cards.
THE AUTHOR.

BY HIS OBEDIENT AND FAITHFUL SERVANT.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE DEDICATED,

FROM HIS WITNESS,

AND IN GRATITUDE REMEMBRANCE OF THE PLEASING PLEASURES,

IN TESTIMONY OF

WILLIAM ROSSOE, ESQ.

TO
SUBSCRIBERS.

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY COPIES ARE PRINTED, WHICH ARE DISPOSED OF IN THE
PREFACE

introduction.

In this Preface I shall, after a few words by way of critical tribunals, I shall offer a few words by way of a friendly notice on this first appeal to a friendly proposition. I shall herein announce which appeals conformably with custom, and impressed appearances, yet in apparent a title of this nature may

upon the reader, and explain his pretensions to hold that the writer may without offence oblige himself bound from useless forms and dry formalities; it is here able to descend from the dignity of authorship, to un- of the writer's and the reader's intercourse, it is allowable are addressed with the same indulgence. In this part friend, and must be received by those to whom they friend, and must be received by those to whom they

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made collections on the subject. Those who take in-
me have been presented, is there any evidence of this having
I made good; nor among his papers which
was never made good; nor among his papers, which
was not made good; nor among his papers; which
I know not; but his promise to the public
is a promise of the results too unimportant for this
question. And found the results too unimportant for this
question, or whether he was disappointed in his en-
courses. Whether there were serious opinions directed his
and I have published a very curious book upon chess, an-
related opinion, who
would be supposed, not entirely
worthy of his attention, may be supposed to have given a
subject which was deemed by a first-rate scholar
his opinion upon. The frontispiece of a
picture has grown up into a formidable volume.
what was at first intended to have formed a small
picture, has grown up into a volume, open to me; led to an
subject of plan, and materials having accumulated,
such as the subject of plan, and materials having accumulated,
sufficient beauty by its very
and the kind communities,
who desired acquaintance of the
and those who desired acquaintance of the
in the following work: thus led to the perusal of the
very early pack of German cards which are engraved
sent the pack of German cards which are engraved
It had some time been my intention to have given a
occasion, to state what may be expected on the present
occasion. With him for a season: with this view I pro-


The history of Playing-cards is so inimitably con-

vened from European writers.

very remarkable source, and that but little assistance is

bodioz, must be enabled to draw their materials from

fortunately has been justly observed, that those who would 

unfortunately necessary to call in the aid of conjecture;

at not overstrained, but such only as are warranted by

the evidence addressed. It cannot be of this nature it is

eral cards, and in the opinions built upon them. I

The first section is devoted to the Origin of Cards.

a success.

the subject has fallen into the hands of so unworthy

the pages will have but too much cause to lament that

writers. It is feared the reader in perusing the follo-

writers, whom so much was to be expected, the curious

have enabled him to finish, particularly from those

from whose great learning and extensive reading would

the facts we have been deprived of the information

in researches of this kind, will join me in regret.
But there are a few individuals who have declared
cannot reasonably be expected to have any sympathy,
whose whose possession are of a different nature, with
upon the conclusion in our estimation, with
then, however, objects which have long engaged the atten-
more important than the reader will be pleased to allow
These inquiries may perhaps have been deemed of
most interesting of the games of cards.
most interesting of the games of cards.
that could be collected respecting some of the principal and
that could be collected respecting some of the principal and
The last section embraces what scanty information
The last section embraces what scanty information

In uncertainty.
In uncertainty.
that on this subject so much must still be left
registered that on this subject so much must still be left
a minute consideration seemed to warrant. It is to be
a minute consideration seemed to warrant. It is to be
question, deducing from the conclusions which
question, deducing from the conclusions which
have given the evidence fairly on both sides.
have given the evidence fairly on both sides.
least, I have endeavored to direct my mind of prayer,
least, I have endeavored to direct my mind of prayer,
that time will. I have endeavored to consider the most important; at
that time will. I have endeavored to consider the most important; at
the English reader, and at the same
the English reader, and at the same
philosophical fashion to the English reader, and at the same
philosophical fashion to the English reader, and at the same
history those attempted. It is believed, may my claim to
history those attempted. It is believed, may my claim to
higher degree of interest. The sketch of Týposaphnical
higher degree of interest. The sketch of Týposaphnical
Gives to the whole inquiry more importance, and a
Gives to the whole inquiry more importance, and a
in these speculations of amusement; and this circumstance
in these speculations of amusement; and this circumstance

Which breaches a goal into our shore wall."

...
Of the prints, which may be considered the most has been written. It was, at whose instance, and under whose patronage, it was engaged that the deities I fell to justify the partiaptity of the epochs, within which volume have been avoided, that my abilities detectors, which would have been avoided, and my abilities be understood that I am not unconscious of some of its degrees under which an author labours are no excuse for the impositions of this work. But anxious it should be of the truth of the assertion, "that the disadventures and its consequences of style and arrangement in the horizon in which they have been composed, and of the want of skill in the writer. I have no better apology to offer of more immediate and indispensable necessity, engaged in above, and myself in this respect. My expectations which has been taken off, demonstrations have any claim to popular favour, and indeed the small I could not expect that a work of this nature should apply to any labours, opposed as it is obtained, will apply to any labours, themselves interested in the subject, here treated, whose
Fellow Beings,

developed to the admiration of the condition of their
lives only are the truly well employed, whose lives are
sufficiently employed, than some of the heroes of the hill.

South Braemar, 7th June, 1816.

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South Braemar, 7th June, 1816.
who may be desirous of comparison, or further investigation.
be found in the book, and they are only here collected with a view to those
represent original languages? the substance of most of them is already to
No apology is offered for printing the documents in this Appendix in their

Deep calls for our grateful thanks.
to the public. The Information accorded by the kindness of J. R. Chandler,
of Dr. Boughan in this place, and we are happy to be instrumental in giving it
is in our hands. The reader will be pleased to see the important paper
in connection with the present. The Appendix, which has been

written with success. The curious extracts from
reference are made by a friend without success. The curious extracts from
connection to obtain it of the principal booksellers in Paris and London has been

creation to obtain it of the principal booksellers in Paris and London has been

It has been thought advisable to retain the title here given Cards by

fears, and these extracts furnish it.
registered that we had been unable to give a description of the Game of 7-Up.

Illustration from the Game of OROCO and the extraction from Cundianus : we
Illustration from the Game of Orooco and the extraction from the
be of use in the compilation. Of this latter kind are the extracts from the
the foregoing pages, and some part of it of materials obtained here to
Some portion of the following Appendix consists of matter referred to in

ADVERTISEMENT.
CONTENTS OF THE APPENDIX.