

Ordinances issued by king Carlos III governing games of dice in the town of Olite

1. ACTIVITIES (1 TO 3 ACTIVITIES)

1. Read document no. 4, analyse its contents and organise the information to write your text commentary. You may use the following materials: the original text - transcribed and adapted (4) and an introductory text for you to become familiar with the historical background (3).

2. Do you know how gambling is regulated nowadays? In Spain a Directorate-General under the Ministry of Finance is in charge of regulating, licensing, supervising and controlling gambling activities and gaming houses. It also imposes penalties in cases of fraud or illegal gambling. Go to the official website www.ordenacionjuego.es and analyse what is considered today as "illegal gambling".

2. TECHNICAL SHEET

1.1.	"Title" of the document	Ordinances issued by king Carlos III governing games of dice in the town of Olite
1.2.	Document date	27/01/1400
1.3.	Documentary typology	Ordinance
1.4.	Language	Navarrese romance
1.5.	Hand style	Minuscule cursive
1.6.	Archive	Royal and General Archive of Navarre (AGN)
1.7.	Signature	AGN, COMPTOS_DOCUMENTOS, CAJ. 99, N. 10, 9-3
1.8.	Number of folios	1
1.9.	Support material	Paper

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Fondness for games of chance was widespread among all layers of society in the Middle Ages, from the peasantry to the nobility. Of all the games of chance, old documents confirm that the most deeply-rooted and widespread were games of dice. Associated with games of chance was the widespread practice of gambling, something that was not well regarded by the Crown. In order to control the economic benefits resulting from gambling, the king ruled that it could only be played in specific venues, called "tafurerías" or "tableros", which were leased to certain individuals to run them. Through this system, the Treasury obtained substantial incomes from such leases as well as from the fines imposed on those who gambled outside these venues. The

figure of the “king of the ribaltes”, i.e. the person in charge of controlling gambling houses, is well documented from as early as the mid-13th century, during the reign of Teobaldo II.

A century later, around 1365, Carlos II prohibited the game of dice in the entire kingdom of Navarre because of the brawls, fights and blasphemies that the fact of gambling caused among men. The town of Olite was home to one of the “tafurerías” of the kingdom, and it seems that over the years the mandate of Carlos II governing such games ceased to be complied with. For that reason, in 1400 his son Carlos III issued an ordinance to remedy the situation. On this occasion, the new prohibition was justified by the increasing number of swindlers and tricksters using rigged dice and cheating on other players. Once again, the prohibition affected playing dice games in squares, streets or hidden places around Olite, so that it could only be played on the “tablero” or “tafurería” or other venues authorized by the provost of Olite, the town's police authority, under fines of 60 “sueldos” – or 60 days in jail in case of insolvency.

4. SELECTED TEXT

Karlos, por la gracia de Dios rey de Navarra, duc de Nemoux. A nuestros amados et fielles las gentes oydores de nuestros Comptos et thesorero, salut. Como nos, veyendo que el juego de dados es causa e ocasión de mucho mal, et informado plenament como muchos hombres de malla vida et conversación continuaban de cada día en el dicho juego en nuestra villa de Ollit en logares ocultos, los quailles con engaynnos de falsos dados e con otras malicias habiendo collarteralles en lur compaynia engaynaban a muchas personas trauandolis los dineros et las vestiduras, et contesçían sobre aqueillo muchas peleas et riotas. Queriendo proveer de remedio conveniente hubiésemos ordenado et mandado que alguno ni algunos non fuesen tan osados de jugar a juego alguno de dados al sequo en plazas nin en cambras nin en otros logares ocultos publicament nin en abscondido sino en los logares e tableros que serían ordenados por el preboste de nuestra dicha villa de Ollit. Et si alguno o algunos fuesen faillados jugando a los dichos dados contra el tenor de nuestra dicha ordenanza et mandamiento que los tales jugadores por cada vegada cada uno d'eillos diesen et pagasen al dicho preboste o a su logartenient de pena et calonia 60 sueldos de carlines prietos. Otrosí hubiésemos ordenado, vedado e defendido que ninguno non fuese tan osado de jugar las vestiduras de su cuerpo nin las empeynnar por jugar publicament nin en abscondido. Et si algunos hiciesen el contrario que semblament fuesen tenidos de pagar así el ganador como el perdedor o aqueillo o aquellos qui sobre pendras o vestiduras prestasen dineros para jugar en el dicho juego por cada vegada cada uno d'eillos 60 sueldos de la dicha moneda. Et más que todos aquellos e quillos que a los tales jugadores envalliesen e consentiesen jugar de día nin de noche en lures casas publicament nin en abscondido sino en los logares e tableros que serían deputados por el dicho preboste como dicho es, que así bien pagasen cada uno de los tales por cada vegada 60 sueldos de la dicha moneda. Et los culpantes que pagar non podiesen los dichos 60 sueldos fuesen pressos et detenidos en presón 60 días sin mercé ninguna. Segunt que esto et otras cosas más largament pueden son contenidas et pueden pareçer por nuestras letras dadas al dicho preboste de la data del 27 día de jenero l'aynno de mil e quatrocientos.

KEY WORDS

- **Tafurería or Tableros:** places approved by the Crown for playing games of chance.
- **Sequo or seco:** type of dice game..
- **Preboste:** local police officer in charge of collecting fines and enforcing judgements in certain towns of Navarre, such as Olite, Estella or the Navarrería of Pamplona. Equivalent to the “justiciar” or “almirante” in other towns around the kingdom.
- **Calonia or caloña:** fine or pecuniary penalty imposed by the courts of justice.

