

## Second Note: Grimm's Wörterbuch

I checked my assumption about the word "kanjifah" by Grimms "Deutsches Wörterbuch". The production of the "Deutsches Wörterbuch" started around 1830 by the brothers Grimm and finished 1960, and it is the major resource for the origin of German words. The article to the word Karnöffel was published 1873. Many passages are not really translatable, as the authors refer to older German language. So here is only my personal excerpt, the informations available didn't contradict my assumption, that Karnoeffel might have derived from Kanjifah.

The "Deutsches Wörterbuch" will soon become available online (see [here](#)).

1. Karnöffel, Karnüffel, Karniffel, Karnöpfel is an expression for scrotal hernia., also it seems to have been used in joking language also for the testicles. The use of the word was probably unknown in 15th century in most parts of Germany, but is noted 1475 in the Teuthonista (lower Rhine language, although the word doesn't seem to originate from there). The origin is in question, one suggestion notes French cornifle, Latin ceratophyllum, a water plant, which develops nuts-similar fruits. The nuts of the water plant might have associated the testicles-idea.

2. karnöffeln appears as word for "playing the game Karnöffel", but is also very farspread in various dialects as "beating" (especially with feasts), also used in variants in North European countries (Norwegia, Sweden, Denmark; karnifle, karnefle, karnuffla). A "Karnöffel" could also be a brutal man. In German language "taken a figure in chessgame or other game" is "schlagen" (identical with "to beat"). The writer of the Grimm-article stays undecided, if this beating-karnöffeln derived from the name of the card-game or if the name of the game derived from the already existing word with the meaning "beating". The farspread use in North European countries he explains with the Hanse (from [John McLeod's page](#) we know, that **many variants of Karnöffel are just played in North European countries**).

3. A Karnöffelmeißel is a special tool of metall for the tinsmith to beat holes in plates. Probably that derived from the general meaning "beating".

4. Karnöffelstag, "day of Karnöffel", probably a humoristic expressions for days which lasted longer than midnight and ended in a pub playing Karnöffel (? or an expression for the second hour after midnight ?; article text is unclear).

5. As name of the card-game it appears first 1426 in Nördlingen, where it is an allowed game (I've found no earlier appearance of the word mentioned somewhere else - by this my above suggested conclusion still stands). The Karnöffel is also an expression for the highest card in the game, the trump-Unter, either understood as cardinal or as Landsknecht (the cardinal seems to be only a speculation of J. Voigt, 1838, probably not reliable). There are at least 30 notes about the game in 15th and 16th century, it's often used in satirical political speech, cause Emperor and Pope appear as roles in the card game. The Karnöffel is often noted together with the devil ("tut im der Teufel icht und karnoffel"; "ach du verfluchter böswicht und teufelskopf mit deinen brüdern den carnöffeln und carnalischen messbischoven"), as also the devil is a personalised card in the card game, the trump-seven. From the trump-seven a German proverb has derived, the "böse sieben" (bad seven).

Some notes:

a. Luther: "die lieben kind (der Welt) ... die macht man zu bauer, karnüffel und babst im karten."



**Jerg Ratgeb (1480 - 1526) painted the Resurrection scene at the Herrenberger Altar (see the complete picture at the site of Jürgen Ludwig), and decorated the soldiers scene with some playing cards. The heart-6, according to some knowledge about the origin of the Karnoeffel as "Pope" identifiable, is centralised. Concluding from that it seems that Heart is the trumps-suit in Karnoeffel. Peter Floetner, painting during the same time of reformation and religious changings, paints the heart-Unter with a heart hanging down like testicles from his genital. Perhaps he reflects with this painting the various double meanings of the word**

b. unclear source, article is unsecure (Luther?): "nun wöllen wir bitten für die zween stend der christenheit, weltlich und geistlich, für unseren vatter den **babst, das ist der sechst in den karten**. Helfent mir bitten für den weltlichen stand, für den römischen König und alle seine unterthonen, das ist de carnöffel und der bawer. " (With "das ist der sechst in der Karten" is meant, that the pope was presented by trump-6, which is of special interest regarding the pictures to the right).

c. Rachel 2, 200 (?): "Es kam ein weib ins haus, wein, bier, karnüffel, trumpf und hunderteins war aus" (especially interesting, as Karnüffel and Trumpf (= Trionfi) are noted in the same sentence; "hundertundeins"(= 101) is another card game.

**Karnöffel current at his time.**



### Third Note: Karneval

Variously it is suggested, that Karnoeffel might have a relation to the word "Karneval" or "Carneval". The German "Karneval" is given as being in use since 17th century for earlier "Fastnacht", relating back to earlier used forms of French "carnavale" and Italian "carnevale". The origin of that forms is unclear, as probable is given the Latin "carnelevale" ("taking away the meat").(Duden, *Etymologie*)

Curiously one can find under the Karnoeffel documents the following, reported by **Jürgen Ludwig**: *Interessant ist Mathesius' Bericht (1592), dass zur Fastenzeit Bergleute sich beim Mummenschanz als Figuren des Karnoeffelspiels verkleiden konnten. Zu Luther kamen sie allerdings als Schachfiguren verkleidet ...* ( Translated: "Interesting is the report of Mathesius (1592), that minors at the occasion of Fastnacht disguised as figures of the Karnoeffelspiel. At Luther's time they came disguised as Chess figures ...). Jürgen Ludwigs report further proceeds: "Sebastian Frank, dessen erste Sprichwoertersammlung im Jahre 1532 erschien, hat ein Sprichwort über das Karnoeffelspiel. Dies weist wieder auf die Verwurzelung des Spieles im Bewusstsein des Volkes hin." (Translation:"Sebastian Frank, whose proverb collection appeared in the year 1532, knows a proverb about the Karnoeffel game. This points to deep roots of the game within the mind of the people."). I mention this here just as curiosity. Karnoeffel is related to the Emperor's game, the Emperor's game to the Imperatori decks first mentioned in Florence 1423, and there is (my suggestion) from this game a relation to chess, as shown at other places here, and