

ON THE TAROT TRUMPS
&
THE TWENTY-TWO ATUS OF THOTH

The tarot trumps and the Genuine Attribution
to the Hebrew Alphabet and the paths of Yetzirah, etc.

From the Ancient A·O· Cypher MSS

Prefatory Remarks by
V. H. Frater 'S. Rioghail Mo Dhream 5°=6°
(Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers)

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The meaning, origin and possible connection of the Tarot Cards has been a question much agitated among occult students during the last century, and the bizarre designs of the Trumps have been especially commented on by various authors, among whom Count de Gèbelin, Etteilla, Eliphaz Lévi and Christian may be said to have made them an especial study.

Etteilla (or Aliette, for that was his real name) only succeeded in making confusion worse confounded, in his long and painful attempts to reform the figures of the trumps, though he was correct in assigning to them an Egyptian Origin.

Count de Gèbelin discussed their designs with the erudition of a clever student of archaeology, but he did not unravel the mystery entirely and evidently was completely misled by the trump representing The Hanged Man No. 12 which he considered was simply the mistake of some illiterate card manufacturer instead of being a hieroglyph fraught with deep meaning, or in other words, that its inverted position was not intentional.

Eliphaz Lévi, not only a clever man, but a deep occult student, and an initiate of the hidden knowledge, rated these singular cards at an inestimable value; and saw in them the key of all the Qabalistic and Egyptian Knowledge. Furthermore, be it remembered that he had in his possession those cypher MSS of the Order of the A ∴ O ∴, as a cypher note of recent date signed with the initials A.L.C. testifies; further stating that he had made use of some of the knowledge contained therein in his occult works. But he probably felt he was not at liberty to divulge to the Outer and uninitiated world the secret and true attribution of the Tarot which was given in the cypher MSS and the attribution which he gave in the *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, and which has been accepted among the uninitiated, is very different to that which has been treasured in the Order of A ∴ O ∴ for centuries and which we must all keep carefully concealed from the knowledge of the profane. To me and to other fellow students who had earnestly studied the Tarot scheme of Lévi and Etteilla, the A ∴ O ∴ attribution came like a revelation and with it before us we could see at a glance that it contained the real secret of the Tarot, however ingenuous the theories advanced by Lévi and Etteilla had seemed till then.

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Learn now, O Practicus of our ancient Order the true meaning of Alpha and Omega. Thirty and two are the paths of Yetzirah, the ten Sephiroth, the twenty and two letters. The ten Sephiroth are the ten numbered cards of each suit; the four suits are the four worlds; the Sixteen¹ Cards are the fourfold tetragrammaton; the twenty and two letters are the twenty and two² Atus or Mansions of Thoth. The twenty-two letters are divided into three mothers, seven doubles and twelve simples; three elements, seven planets, twelve signs. So is it also with the twenty-two atus. Therein are the elements, therein are the planets, therein are the signs; for the book of Thoth is the Universe, and the Universe is the Veil of God. Learn then, O Practicus, to know the Universe, learn also to know thyself, seek in the manifest for the Divine One, and when thou hast found Him, veil thine eyes in adoration. Behold the true attribution of Tarot, ponder it in thine heart; reveal it not to the profane.

These be the 22 Atus:

¹The four honours in each suit.

²This word Atus is then the derivation of the French words Atous or Atouts -Trumpes. It is pure Egyptian, the plural of Aat, a mansion; Aatu, Mansions.

THE TWENTY-TWO ATUS OF THOTH

NO.	TITLE	HEBREW LETTER	HEBREW	ATTRIB-UTION	PATH OF YETZIRAH
0	The Foolish Man (MAT)	א	Aleph	♁ Air	11 th
1	The Juggler (PAGAD)	ב	Beth	♿ Mercury	12 th
2	The High Priestess	ג	Gimel	☾ Luna	13 th
3	The Empress	ד	Daleth	♀ Venus	14 th
4	The Emperor	ה	Hé	♈ Aries	15 th
5	The Hierophant	ו	Vau	♉ Taurus	16 th
6	The Lovers	ז	Zain	♊ Gemini	17 th
7	The Chariot	ח	Cheth	♋ Cancer	18 th
8	Strength (Justice at one time)	ט	Teth	♌ Leo	19 th
9	The Hermit (Prudence)	י	Yod	♍ Virgo	20 th
10	The Wheel of Fortune	כ	Kaph	♃ Jupiter	21 st
11	Justice (Strength at one time)	ל	Lamed	♎ Libra	22 nd
12	The Hanged Man	מ	Mem	♊ Water	23 rd
13	Death	נ	Nun	♏ Scorpio	24 th
14	Temperance	ס	Samekh	♐ Sagittarius	25 th
15	The Devil	ע	A'ain	♑ Capricorn	26 th
16	The Tower	פ	Pé	♂ Mars	27 th
17	The Star	צ	Tzaddi	♒ Aquarius	28 th
18	The Moon	ק	Qoph	♓ Pisces	29 th
19	The Sun	ר	Resh	☉ Sol	30 th
20	The Last Judgment (Angel)	ש	Shin	♁ Fire	31 st
21	The Universe	ת	Tau	♄ Saturn	32 nd

First cometh the one numbered 0, the circle of the heavens, the Negative; then 1 the circle opened out into a right line, the Positive. These two numbers have corrupted Egyptian titles attached to them which are to the 0 MAT; to the 1 POGOD: these are Maut — the Mother-Goddess, & Pekht — stretch out — extension — the Mother-Goddess of all extended through the Universe. 'And above the shoulders of that great

Goddess is Nature in her vastness exalted'. Note that the last Atus is called the 'Universe'.

8 Justice is referred to ♋ and Libra, and 11 Strength is referred to ♌ and Leo, which causeth a transposition in the attribution, for these are cognate symbols. But at one time the sword of Justice was the Egyptian 'knife' symbol of the 'Sickle of Leo'¹, while the scales represented the sun having just quitted the balance point of highest declination. Similarly the female and the Lion represented the idea of Venus (Lady of Libra) repressing the fire of Vulcan (Saturn in Libra exalted). But the earliest attribution was the Lion-Goddess (or Lion-God of Horus) to Leo and MAT the Goddess of Truth with her scales to Libra, and this is therefore better. Also Libra was attributed to Horus at one time.

So unto the 'Foolish Man' is attributed Air, moveable and never permanent. The 'Juggler' is the natural symbol of Mercury, the God of Tricksters and also of the deeper knowledge. The 'High Priestess' findeth her natural correlative in the Moon. Venus is the 'Empress'; Aries is the Emperor, for the Sun is exalted in that martial and commanding sign. And so also with the others, in each shalt thou find its natural attribution.

¹The name of the forepart of that constellation under the title of 'Horus of the Solar Mountain'.

NOTE BY V.H. FRA. 'S RIOGHAIL MO DHREAM

Among the Greeks and Romans there existed a peculiar attribution of the Deities to the Zodiacal Signs, thus:

♃	MINERVA	The Owl
♀	VENUS	The Dove
♁	APOLLO	The Tripod
♿	MERCURY	The Turtle
♃	JUPITER	The Eagle
♁	CERES	The Basket
♃	VULCAN	The Cap with Serpent
♃	MARS	The Wolf
♁	DIANA	The Dog
♃	VESTA	The Lamp
♃	JUNO	The Peacock
♃	NEPTUNE	The Dolphin

Pairing the opposite signs together we obtain known affinities of the Gods and Goddesses, thus:

♃ and ♁	Minerva and Vulcan
♀ and ♃	Venus and Mars
♁ and ♁	Apollo and Diana
♿ and ♃	Mercury and Vesta
♃ and ♃	Jupiter and Juno
♁ and ♃	Ceres and Neptune

[This]—it may be remarked *en passant*—is totally different to the *astrological* attribution of the Planets bearing the names of certain of the Deities, to the Signs.

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