The background of the cover is a painting of an Egyptian queen, likely Cleopatra, seated on a throne. She is wearing a red and white striped dress and a black wig with gold ornaments. To her left is a large, stylized flame. In the foreground, a leopard is visible. The title text is overlaid on the scene.

the
Ancient
Egyptian
tarot

Clive Barrett

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TAROT



CLIVE BARRETT

TAKES THE CLASSIC TAROT FULL CIRCLE
AND BACK TO THE LAND OF
ITS ANCESTORS

**THE
ANCIENT
EGYPTIAN
TAROT**

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CLIVE
BARRETT



Thorsons

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CONTENTS

Preface	vii
Introduction to the Tarot	1
Predicting the Future	1
The Construction of the Tarot	2
History and Origins	3
The Development of the Esoteric Tarot	5
Symbolism and Structure	8
The Major Arcana	11
The Egyptian Foundations of Tarot	12
The Osirian Resurrection and the Major Arcana	13
Osiris and Other Mythologies	14
The Later Development of Egyptian Religion	16
The Major Cards	18
The Minor Arcana	62
The Four Suits	62
The Number Cards	64
The Court Cards	64
Wands	66
Cups	80
Swords	94
Disks	108

The Spreads	122
Reversed Cards	124
Combinations of Cards	124
Self Readings	126
The Four Card Spread	126
The Astrological Spread	126
The Cabbalistic Spread	128
The Celtic Cross	130
Appendices	133
Cabbala Attributions	134
The Tree of Life	136
The Major Arcana and the Osirian Resurrection	137
The Minor Arcana and Astrology	138
The Geometry of the Cards	140
Hieroglyphs	141
Bibliography	142
Index of Cards	146
General Index	147

PREFACE

This book aims to fulfil two distinct but complementary functions. For those new to the Tarot, it gives complete instruction on how to successfully use the cards. Those with more experience of the Tarot will find an explanation of the background, the thoughts and ideas behind the Ancient Egyptian Tarot.

The cards of the Ancient Egyptian Tarot have been designed from their very conception to be usable by both the novice and the experienced reader. Each card is fully illustrated, and so not only more satisfying for both the reader and the subject but also readily accessible to the beginner. The titles and sequence of the Major Arcana follow that of the Rider-Waite Tarot, and the practised user will find deeper symbols contained within the illustrations.

To Kyphi – Djenoun Belfalas
forever young

INTRODUCTION TO THE TAROT

PREDICTING THE FUTURE

The Tarot has several advantages over other forms of divination, the greatest of which is that it may be used successfully by a relatively unskilled reader. Accuracy, as would be expected, improves with practice, for it is only with practice that one develops intuition and clairvoyance. Many use the Tarot as a way of developing their powers of ESP.

For the beginner it is possible to use the cards immediately, however the learning process can go on for many years. There will always be something new to discover about the Tarot. Day by day, week by week, a relationship between a particular pair of cards will suddenly fall into place, or a deeper meaning will become apparent.

The Tarot has an unprecise relationship with the dimension of time. Contrary to popular opinion the cards cannot predict the future. If the future were a definite and unalterable fact then the cards could be used to predict it. But the future is not a predetermined and planned event; if it were it would require a planner.* What will happen tomorrow varies, sometimes subtly, sometimes dramatically. It is constantly adapting and changing, responding to the events and decisions made today. Viewed in this way, the future is not a definite and unavoidable fact; what

*This raises more problems than it solves. If the future were predetermined, then every detail of every event would have to be considered in advance, in effect creating the future in all its minutiae before it actually happens.

actually occurs is one of a number of possibilities. The concept may be represented visually in the shape of a cone. The apex represents the present, the future paths spreading out to the base, which represents all possible outcomes. The numerous possible futures converge the closer they are to the present, where they become the single event we call 'now'. So any prediction relating to the future should be considered as an option which may be influenced by the preceding events. In a reading, the cards will give an indication of how the eventual outcome of a situation may be manipulated or controlled by the questioner. This may be a pointer to how to achieve a particular aim, or to actions that would prevent an undesirable event occurring. *Whatever the reading, the questioner always has the power to determine his or her own future.*

When made aware of the possibilities, one is better able to prepare for and grasp any advantage. Without this awareness, one is left helpless, unable to steer a course to the future. In such a state *no* advance is attainable.

This also explains why two consecutive readings for the same person may be totally different. Following a first reading, the questioner will have absorbed the information given, either consciously or subconsciously, and so will have a different understanding of the options available when entering into the second consultation. The possibilities have *already been affected* by this understanding.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TAROT

A Tarot deck traditionally has 78 cards, and is divided into two sections, the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana. The first, also known as the Greater Arcana or the Trumps, consists of 22 cards and is generally considered to be the more important part. The Minor or Lesser Arcana makes up the remaining 56 cards and is subdivided into four suits – Wands, Cups, Swords and Disks. These correspond to the four suits of standard playing cards – Clubs, Hearts, Spades and Diamonds respectively. Also like playing cards, each suit has ten numbered cards, occasionally termed the 'pip' cards. There are, however, four rather than three

Court cards in each suit, the King, Queen, Prince and Princess. Some decks have alternative names for the suits and for the Court cards.

The Tarot is known mainly for its role in divination, but it does have other uses not covered by this book: as an aid to meditation, a system for spiritual development, or in magic and ritual.

Towards the end of this book there is a section describing a number of spreads which may be used for divination. These spreads vary in their complexity, but basically they all follow the same rules. Cards are placed in specific positions, each position representing a particular idea, such as the past or the questioner's immediate surroundings. The cards are then interpreted in the context of the position in which they fall.

When one is in a situation which, despite all attempts to understand it, remains clouded and unclear, the Tarot may be consulted. It will provide the user with fresh insights and new perspectives, enabling one to see through the confusion. Continued use of the Tarot in this way will lead to a release from the constraints of conventional thought to a higher wisdom. It opens a door to a new understanding. *The Tarot is a map in which the symbols are signposts guiding the traveller on the path of life.*

HISTORY AND ORIGINS

There are many theories relating to the origin of the Tarot. Amongst occultists there is a widely-held belief that the Tarot originated in Ancient Egypt. Others suggest the Mahatmas of Tibet or the Cabbalists of Medieval Spain as candidates for their invention. Some suppose that they were introduced into Europe by travelling Gypsies.* Each theorist bases his opinion on a single facet of similarity between the cards and a particular culture – for example, the four elemental symbols of the Tarot occur in Hindu mythology as the deity Ardhanari, an androgynous being uniting male and female forces. Ardhanari is shown in Hindu art with four arms holding a cup, sceptre, sword and ring. The Hindu monkey

*The name 'Gypsy' is a corruption of the word 'Egyptian' and reflects the belief, once held, that the travellers originated in that country.

god, Hanuman, is also depicted with the same symbols. However, these items have never appeared on Indian playing cards throughout their long history. Similar symbols also occur in Celtic myth as the four Graal Hallows.

It is only when one comes to noble families of Northern Italy in the early fifteenth century that one finds solid facts upon which conclusions may be drawn. For to consider the history of the Tarot, one must distinguish between playing cards and Tarot cards.

In some parts of the world the full Tarot deck is still used for playing games. It is common in Italy, Czechoslovakia, France, Switzerland, Yugoslavia and North Africa, whilst in many others places it has been diminished to become the standard deck of 52 playing cards. (It has been claimed that the Joker in this pack is descended from the Fool, being the last remnant of the Major Arcana. This belief is, regrettably, unfounded – the Joker was created as an advertising novelty by a North American card maker in the 1850s!)

One of the earliest references to cards is by the Italian author Covelluzzo who (writing in 1480) stated that in the year 1379 cards were introduced to Italy from North Africa by the Arabs. The Arabs had occupied parts of Spain for over 700 years until their expulsion in 1492. They gave the cards the name 'naib', which became in Spanish 'naipes'. During the medieval period, Arabs also settled in France, Switzerland and Belgium. If they *were* the source, then it would have been easy for them to disseminate the cards throughout the continent. Unfortunately no indication is given in these early references to whether playing cards or Tarot cards are being referred to.

The oldest existing decks of Tarot cards are all decks originating in Northern Italy. The hand-painted Tarot designed for the Visconti family has been dated at 1415. Around this time decks were also made for other wealthy North Italian families. In Italy the cards are known by the name 'Tarocco', the plural of which is 'Tarocchi'. (It may be relevant that a river in the area was named Taro.)

These Tarot cards were hand painted and so were a costly purchase making them beyond the reach of the vast majority of

the population – only a Noble family could afford such an extravagant luxury. However, with the invention of printing, about the year 1423, there came cards produced using woodblock printing techniques. The availability of these relatively cheap printed cards would have helped to encourage the spread of their use. Although examples of early printed cards have survived, it is not always possible to date them with accuracy. An exception is an Italian card, the Two of Disks, which actually bears the date 1499 (although it could have been printed after this date). This is the earliest known printed card.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ESOTERIC TAROT

Antoine Court de Gebelin (1725-84) was an amateur scholar with interests in many areas. In his monumental work *Le Monde Primitiff Analyse et Compare avec le Monde Moderne* (8 volumes, Paris, 1782), he raised the supposition that the Tarot originated in Ancient Egypt. He claimed that it had escaped the destruction of the Library of Alexandria, and that it contained the pure doctrine of the Ancient Egyptians. At the time he was writing this, the skill of reading hieroglyphs had been lost for almost 1200 years and there existed the widely-held belief that they were magical symbols concealing the lost knowledge of antiquity. He saw the Tarot as a contemporarily available pictorial embodiment of this occult wisdom, a tangible link with the past.

Some 18 years later a stone was found at Rosetta bearing a royal proclamation inscribed in three different scripts – Greek, demotic (a simplified form of hieroglyphs used mainly outside the priesthood) and hieroglyphic. Classical Greek was easily understood so, by comparing this with the hieroglyphic inscription, a translation was painstakingly pieced together. To the surprise of many, the subsequent translation of the texts of Egypt revealed little of the expected mystical knowledge, and nothing was found to resemble the Tarot in the least. But by this time the theories of de Gebelin had entered into popular occultism.

A French barber named Alliette, writing under the pseudonym Etteilla (his name spelled backwards), followed de Gebelin's lead

and revised the Tarot to comply with his own idiosyncratic idea of Egyptian mysticism. It has to be said, his Tarot has had less influence upon subsequent designs than have his ideas.

In the mid 1850s a third Frenchman, Alphonse Louis Constant (originally a deacon of the Catholic Church), began to publish occult works. For the purposes of authorship he translated his name into Hebrew and wrote under the name Eliphas Levi (he dropped the final 'Zahed'). His books contained Tarot references and symbolism and it was he who first established the link between the Tarot and cabbala (or Qabalah).

A Tarot deck was later produced based upon Levi's ideas by Oswald Wirth. A little later, Dr Gerard Encauss (1865-1916), writing in 1889 under the pseudonym Papus, used Wirth's cards in his book *The Tarot of the Bohemians*.*

About this time the impetus for the development of the Tarot moved from France to England. Here the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, founded in London in 1888, imposed a number of changes which have greatly influenced Tarot design up to the present day. Realizing that the published attributions of Levi and his followers were influenced by oaths of secrecy sworn as members of French occult societies, the Golden Dawn's publications restored the correct order of the cards. The books of Levi, Wirth and Papus place the Fool (numbered 0) between Judgement (20) and The World (21). Unfortunately, this deliberate concealing of the truth was not always recognized, and some later authors have been misled, which has resulted in them drawing erroneous and confusing conclusions. The Golden Dawn returned the Fool to its original position as the first card of the Major Arcana. This done, the remainder of the correspondences fell happily into place.

The Golden Dawn was made up of practical magicians dissatisfied with The Theosophical Society's limited and purely theoretical approach to the occult. One of the central aims of the Golden Dawn was to unite all the occult traditions of the world

* Papus used the word Bohemians to refer to the Gypsies, whom he also believed to be Egyptian.

into a single working system. They drew upon the cabbalistic text known as the *Sepher Yetzirah* (the *Book of Formation*), which linked the elements, planets and signs of the zodiac with the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and brought a further dimension to the Tarot. Although this addition to the Tarot canon did not occur until the late 1880s, the symbolism meshed perfectly with that already present within the cards. With this association in place, the Tarot was forever opened up to the influence on the world's myths and religions.

The Golden Dawn came to regard the Tarot as the central pictorial key to the whole of its rather eclectic magical system. Its members were expected to study it deeply and were actively encouraged to design (or at least copy) a Tarot deck for their own personal use. Regrettably none of the designs of the society were made publicly available at the time. However, in 1910 a deck designed by Arthur E. Waite and executed by Pamela Coleman Smith (both members of the Golden Dawn) was published. This highly influential deck, the first to be fully illustrated, is known as the Rider-Waite Tarot.

Other members of Golden Dawn and its later off-shoots have published Tarot decks following its symbolism. Two are of more significance than others. Paul Foster Case (1884-1954), an American occultist, published his deck known as the BOTA Tarot in 1927 (after his magical order the Builders Of The Adytum). This deck is closely based on the designs of the Rider-Waite Tarot, to the extent that some cards are almost exact replicas.

Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) joined the Golden Dawn in 1898, and following the principles of the society he devoted his life to the unification of the world's esoteric traditions and religions. He made the fruits of his work available to all, much to the anger of those who would have had these things remain concealed. The Aleister Crowley Thoth Tarot deck was painted by Lady Frieda Harris under his direction and took five years to complete. It was first seen in *The Book of Thoth* (1944), but was not issued as a deck of cards until 1977, some 30 years after his death. The vision and depth of insight make *The Book of Thoth* possibly the most original and valuable work on the Tarot ever written.

The attributions applied to or discovered within the Tarot indicate that it has always held within its structure the potential for further and continuing development and embellishment. The agreement even unto the smallest detail is so precise it suggests either that it was implicit within the concept from its first origination, or that there is a basic universal structure beneath all human philosophies. This second conclusion makes itself evident in the constant resonance between the many systems, including Jung's archetypes. Given this universal structure, there is little wonder that so many of the world's esoteric systems may be successfully applied to the Tarot.

From this brief history of the Tarot it may be seen that many strands of human knowledge have come together to make the Tarot what it is today. At present Jung's theories of archetypes are greatly influencing the exploration of the Tarot. His ideas of synchronicity provide clues to how it functions. More recently Quantum mechanics is beginning to be used as a means of explaining the deeper mechanisms, linking all things throughout the universe, with the smallest action having an influence on everything else.

SYMBOLISM AND STRUCTURE

The cards of the Tarot represent only the visible tip of an esoteric iceberg. Beneath the surface lies a wealth of hidden knowledge. To give an idea of the depth of the concealed riches, it is necessary to explain a little of the part of the Western Esoteric Tradition known as the cabbala. There is not the space here to go into great detail, but some knowledge of the relationship between the Tarot and the system of the Cabbalists will help extend the user's understanding of the cards.

The cabbala as a system of esoteric thought may be summarised in the pictorial representation known as the Tree of Life (see page 136). The Tree consists of ten spheres known as Sephirah (singular Sephiroth), which are linked by 22 paths. A letter of the Hebrew alphabet is assigned to each path.* Similarly each of the 22 cards

* When viewed looking downwards from the highest sphere to the lowest, these paths represent the fall from perfection to earthly manifestation. Looking upwards, it is the ascent from worldly matters to the highest level of spiritual awareness.

of the Major Arcana is attributed to a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This alphabet consists of 22 letters, each of which is one of three types. Firstly the 'mother' letters of which there are three, then seven 'double' letters, and finally the remaining 12 'single' letters. The three mother letters correspond to the three elements, Air, Water and Fire. The seven double letters to the seven planets, Mercury, Moon, Venus, Jupiter, Mars, Sun and Saturn. The single letters each correspond to one of the 12 signs of the zodiac. By this means, each card of the Major Arcana has an element, planet or sign attributed to it.

All the letters are individually named. For example, the 12th letter has the sound corresponding to the Roman 'm' and is called 'mem', which in the Hebrew language means 'water'. Incidentally, the origin of this letter is the Ancient Egyptian hieroglyph for the sound 'm', the pictogram for water which took the form of a horizontal zig-zag line. Many of our letter symbols may be similarly traced back to Ancient Egypt.

Finally, the Jews had no special symbols for numbers, so each letter was given a numerical value.

All these elements (the letter, its name, number, astrological sign and others) have an influence on the interpretation of the cards. Indeed the interpretations used by all Tarot readers are based almost wholly on these cabbalistic attributions, although these origins are often unknown to them.

THE MAJOR ARCANA

The Major Arcana deals with the archetypal forces of the collective unconsciousness. These are the pure powers of nature, representing the macrocosm, the universal structure. According to the findings of the psychologist Jung, the unconscious mind may be divided into two distinct areas, the personal unconsciousness and the much greater collective unconsciousness.

The personal unconsciousness is the repository of one's day-to-day experiences. Whether remembered or forgotten, all our emotions and feelings are held here.

The collective unconsciousness, however, is not particular to any single individual, but is shared in common by the whole of mankind. It contains the memories of our ancestors, a record of the collective experiences of humanity. This includes concepts, ideas and ways of thinking and reacting to the world. It is common to all peoples, independent of historical or cultural tradition, and is known by some as the Wisdom of the Ages, by others as the Race Memory.

Jung considered that contacting the collective unconsciousness played an important part in one's self-development. In his therapies he examined the imagery of dreams. Beneath the surface gloss, which related to the dreamer's personal unconsciousness (see the Minor Arcana), he found that the deeper levels could be uncovered. These related to the collective unconsciousness. By contact with the collective unconsciousness the dreamer has access to the knowledge acquired by mankind over millennia.

The collective unconsciousness uses a language of images

known as archetypes. The archetypes appear in personified or symbolic picture form. They are cross-cultural and may be recognized in all mythologies, fairie tales and religious traditions (myths describe psychic processes in a highly symbolic form). Archetypes are the basic forces of the universe, and represent typical fundamental experiences. As the basic building blocks of experience they are of necessity limited in number, but when combined, the archetypes represent the sum total of the inherent potential of the human psyche. This is a huge inexhaustible treasure house of ancient knowledge dealing with the most profound relations between man and the cosmos.

THE EGYPTIAN FOUNDATIONS OF TAROT

A firm grounding in the myths of the Ancient Egyptians, whilst not essential, will provide the reader with a deeper understanding of the contents of the cards of the Major Arcana. There is no physical evidence to support the theory that the Tarot originated in Ancient Egypt. However there is strong reason to believe that the Tarot as a collection of mystical images draws upon Ancient Egyptian sources.

As mentioned previously, the first known Tarot deck is dated 1415. This was during the Renaissance when mankind was stumbling out of the ignorance of the past. It was a time of rediscovery. In Spain the once lost works of Greek and Roman authors were being translated from their Arab copies into Latin and other European languages. Pagan culture and ancient knowledge influenced men's thinking. Minds were broadening, released from centuries of restraint. Science had not yet been separated from philosophy and mysticism. Scholars were keen to pursue all forms of knowledge and had the time to do so. The magical arts – alchemy, astrology and cabbalism, were studied side by side with chemistry, astronomy and theology.

Other influences came from the Celtic fringe. The noble courts of Europe thrilled with the stories of the Arthurian romances, ranking them with the best of classical works. (Malory's *Mort D'Arthur*, which drew together the stories relating to the life of the legendary king into a structured whole, was completed around

1469–70.) Behind many of these strands of rediscovery – the myths, sciences, magical arts and philosophies – there lay the Egyptian Mysteries. Transformed by time, they were never the less highly influential upon the thinking of the period.

Renaissance art was symbolic rather than decorative. The paintings of the masters reflected the mood of the age, they are highly allegorical and contain strong biblical and mythical themes which occur in the cards of the Tarot. Indeed, many Tarot images have parallels in the religious and secular art of 14th and 15th Centuries.

Continental Europe was in a state of change, transforming from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era. Against the background of the Renaissance, beginning as it did in 13th Century Italy, there is little wonder that the Tarot should make its appearance in this place and at this time. Nor is there any doubt that in its form and imagery it draws deeply on the Mysteries of Ancient Egypt.

THE OSIRIAN RESURRECTION AND THE MAJOR ARCANA

The cycle of stories known as the Osirian Resurrection was the most important part of Ancient Egyptian myth. It was central to their religion for over 3,000 years. The myth of the death of Osiris and his resurrection by Isis became the foundation of the faith of the Egyptian people confirming their belief in a life after death.

There is a close conformity between the traditions of the Major Arcana and the myth of Osiris. The cards fall naturally into two groups; the early cards, numbered 0 to 8, introduce the major gods; the later cards, 9 to 21, tell the story of the death and resurrection of Osiris.

The world is created by Amun (The Fool), from the darkness of Nuit. His word is embodied in the god of time, Thoth (The Magician). The High Priestess is Isis, the sister-wife of Osiris. Next is Hathor (The Empress), another aspect of Isis. The first ruler of the newly-created world is Amun-Ra (The Emperor), and his successor is Osiris (The Hierophant). The parents and grandparents of the gods appear in The Lovers. The Chariot shows

Horus, the child of Osiris and Isis. As the power of Ra diminishes, Sekhmet (Strength) seeks to bring his errant subjects back to his rule.

The Hermit shows Osiris in his journey to the East where he spread the knowledge of civilization amongst the uncivilized peoples. In The Wheel of Fortune, the creator god Khnum stands before the ever-turning wheel of fate. The rule of Osiris and Isis was a time of justice and equality for all (Justice). Eventually Osiris returns to Egypt, but realises that he must surrender his position (in a form of self sacrifice) before he can advance spiritually (The Hanged Man). He permits his body to be trapped in a casket (Death). Isis and her sister Nephthys (Temperance) search for the body of Osiris. Set (The Devil), with his aid Apophis, takes control of Egypt, enslaves the population, and mankind is put in chains. Osiris is discovered but his body is again taken by Set and broken into pieces. His great works are destroyed, his temples ruined, his earthly embodiment is shattered for ever (The Tower). Isis (The Star) again searches, here with the aid of Thoth (in the guise of an Ibis). The body of Osiris is discovered for a second time. Magically Horus is conceived, and the dead god passes on to the gates of the netherworld where he is soon to become its ruler (The Moon). The child Horus is born in perfect balance (The Sun). Judgement shows Osiris resurrected as Lord of the Underworld, Amenti, the land to the west, his subjects freed from their bindings. Finally the universal balance is restored in the goddess Nuit (The World).

This is but a brief sketch of the content of the Major Arcana. There is a wealth of deeper symbolism to be found in each card. This is expanded upon in the individual descriptions of the cards.

OSIRIS AND OTHER MYTHOLOGIES

The myth of Osiris has parallels in other and later beliefs. The Celtic tales of King Arthur provide many similarities. The name Arthur is phonetically similar to Asar. The name 'Osiris' is a Greek rendition of the Egyptian name Asar. The hieroglyphic symbols for the name of Osiris are an eye, representing divine power, and a throne – kingship. It has been suggested that the

name Arthur (and that of his father Uther) is derived from a word meaning leader or king. The main points of correlation of the two myths are listed below for comparison.

Osiris

Myths developed from an historical figure
Birth is made possible by Thoth, god of magic
Has only one offspring, a son, Horus.
The mother is his sister Isis
A just and civilising ruler
Goes abroad leaving Isis to rule Egypt
In his absence his brother Set plots against him
Osiris returns to his throne
Set is responsible for his his eventual downfall
Body is thrown into the Nile in a coffin.
Coffins are traditionally guarded by four goddesses
Osiris passes to Amenti, the Egyptian underworld

Arthur

Myths developed from an historical figure
Birth is made possible by the magician Merlin
Has only one offspring, a son, Mordred.
The mother is his sister Margawse
A just and civilising ruler
Goes to France leaving Mordred to rule England
In his absence his son Mordred plots against him
Arthur returns to his throne
Mordred is responsible for his eventual downfall
Body is carried across water in a magical boat, accompanied by four queens
Arthur passes to Annwn, the Celtic underworld or Avalon

There are also many similarities with the Norse myths. Odin (or Othin), king of the gods, is believed to be based on an historical king or leader. He left his home in Asgard and was searched for by his tearful wife. His life was continually dogged by the interference of the jealous Loki, who brings about his eventual downfall. In one story Odin hangs from a tree, suggesting the tree in which the body of Osiris was encased. There is a journey into the underworld to resurrect Balder (Odin's son, a solar deity like Horus), who was killed by the trickery of Loki. (Loki was a fire

god – Set was the god of the burning Sun.) In the traditional Viking funeral the body of the deceased was set adrift in a ship. Odin like Osiris was regarded as the Psychopompos – the leader of souls.

Similar comparisons may be drawn with the myths and beliefs of many other races. This can be an illuminating undertaking, and to do so will greatly increase the reader's understanding of the nature of myth.

THE LATER DEVELOPMENT OF EGYPTIAN RELIGION

Throughout the period prior to the Christianization of Egypt and the Christians' destruction of the great library of ancient wisdom at Alexandria, the priests of Egypt travelled the known world. The extent of their influence may be seen in the widespread worship of the gods of Egypt beyond its borders. The Egyptian Mysteries spread to Greece and later to Rome and from there to the whole of the Roman Empire. A temple to the goddess Isis, known as the Iseum, was erected in Pompeii in 105BCE. The Emperor Caligula built another in Rome, where she was worshipped for almost 500 years.

In the time of the Ptolomies (332BCE – 30BCE), the priests of Alexandria created a synthetic religion. They combined elements of the Greek and Egyptian faiths, uniting the mysteries of Eleusis with those of Egypt. They created a composite god whom they named Serapis (by joining together elements of Osiris and Apis) as a consort for Isis, and renamed Horus Harpocrates. Together, Serapis, Isis and Harpocrates formed a trinity of gods suitable for acceptance by the peoples of both Greece and Rome. The trinity was usually joined by the dog-headed Anubis, representing Hermes-Mercury.

The emperor Domitian rebuilt and enlarged a temple dedicated to Isis in 92CE. She was considered one of the principal goddesses of Rome in the first century before the Common Era. Her worship extended throughout Europe and the North of Africa. To date evidence has been discovered in Spain, France, Germany, Holland and Britain. In Britain her altars were built by the soldiers of the Sixth Legion, who were stationed in York.

With the passage of time the purity of the Egyptian religion declined, being influenced by the beliefs already present in Europe. Its form changed, the rituals became more important than the doctrines which inspired them. The Egyptian Mystery schools of Alexandria did however influence both the cabbala and the Koran.

Examples of the outcropping of Egyptian belief through the veneer of present-day Christianity are many and varied. There is the traditional reverence of the medieval witch for the cat and the goat, both of which had a prominent place in Ancient Egypt. Indeed the cat still has a special place in the lives of many, quite distinct from any other domestic animal. The customs associated with the bringing in of the harvest have close links with Osiris. The swallow, sacred to Isis, is held in great esteem throughout Europe. In Germany and France it is thought to arrive, flying from Paradise, on 25 March, the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin.*

When Christianity finally displaced the earlier religion many believers simply transferred to the Virgin Mary the attributes of Isis, and to the child Jesus those of Horus. The links between Judaism and Christianity and Egyptian religion, however, are many and varied.

*The feast of Isis was held at the time of the Spring Equinox. Horus, a solar god, was born at the Winter Solstice, and ceremonies marking the death of Osiris, the harvest god, were held at the Autumn Equinox.





0 THE FOOL



Letter
Aleph

Element
Air

Colour
Yellow

Title
Spirit of the Aether

0 • THE FOOL

As the first card of the deck, the Fool is the card of beginnings and creation. It represents generative power, and as such it is a card of opposites, both male and female elements combining to form a balanced whole. Its number is 0, the origin that comes before the solid reality of the number 1. It is the first measured stirrings of the universe. The image brings together the many threads of the Egyptian creation myth.

A mound was raised up, out of the primeval waters personified by the goddess Nun. Upon this mound the first god created himself, and then he made the gods Shu (air) and Tefnut (moisture). These in turn gave birth to Geb (earth) and Nuit (sky). Other myths speak of the cosmic egg rising from the waters from which the sun emerges, giving light to the first day. The divine child within the egg is the unborn Horus, in the form of Harpocrates, his finger resting on his lip to signify silence. This is the light before dawn. A further mythic variant has a lotus flower floating upon the dark water, the petals opened to reveal the sun god.

The card shows the god Amun, the creator god, walking on the

primeval mound. His name means 'hidden', 'veiled' or 'invisible'. He is the hidden god, the god behind the universe, the power beyond the sun.

From the Fool's belt hangs a bag. Traditionally it contains all his worldly possessions, his memories and his potentials. In Egyptian symbolism, the feather in his hand represents truth; it is the emblem of Ma'at, the goddess of truth. The Wand held in his right hand combines the elements of the Waas sceptre with the Djed and the Ankh.

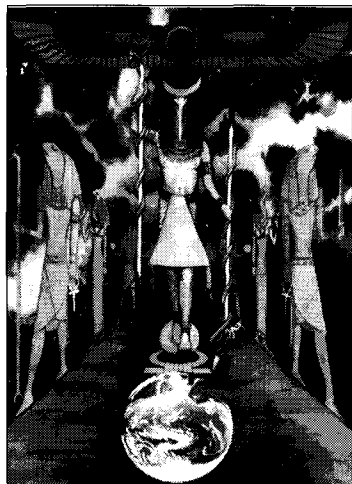
A Crocodile is waiting unseen for the Fool to stray from the path. He is the embodiment of Set, the adversary of the gods known as the devourer of hearts. It is the destroyer that complements the creator, for within the beginning there is the seed of its own ultimate destruction.

The dog which traditionally accompanies the Fool suggests the dog star Sirius or Sothis, which played a large part in the Egyptian myths. In the sky is the vulture of the goddess Mut, the wife of Amun. The name Mut means mother, she was the great mother goddess. A symbol of maternal protection, it was thought that the vulture sheltered her young with her outspread wings.

The Fool walks his carefree path, his steps random like the flight of the butterfly which precedes him. But his faithful dog guards and guides him from the hidden pitfalls represented by the crocodile.

Interpretation

The card indicates new beginnings, the start of a new cycle of activity, innocence and naivety. A creative dreamer. Hidden talents and latent potential. Optimism unaffected by past events. This is a card of imagination and fantasies, impulsiveness and blind instincts. He lives in his own mind, all that he experiences is interpreted to fit his view of the world. Conversely, the world is transformed to comply with his expectations. He is pure, uncomplicated and vulnerable. He searches for experience. He is the innocent child, a small boat adrift on the sea of life, blown by the winds of fate.



Letter

Beth

Element

Mercury

Colour

Yellow

Title

Magus of Power

I • THE MAGICIAN

Thoth, the magician god of Egypt, descends from heaven to the earth. His foot rests upon the moon for he is a lunar deity. His golden path is also a pyramid. The pyramids were constructed by the Egyptians as a means of ascending to the heavens after death. They believed that they would exist for ever as stars in the sky.

To either side of his path are the figures of the Ogdoad, his frog- and serpent-headed aides. These are two-dimensional – like wall paintings. They are not physical beings but representatives of the forms of creation. They carry ankhs and the emblems of the four elements. Beneath Thoth is the ring symbol, the hieroglyph which represents infinity.

Thoth was an important god to the Egyptians. His sphere of responsibilities was extensive. He was the god of time, and this was linked to the moon which is a form of celestial clock. He wears a lunar crescent upon his head. His association with the moon and the hours of darkness led him to become a guide to the souls of the dead. He invented hieroglyphs and was the god of communication and trade. In all these areas he has a strong

similarity with Hermes and Mercury of Greece and Rome.

His head is that of the Ibis, the bird sacred to him; to the Ancient Egyptians it was the symbol of mental concentration. The winged solar disk above him represents the earthly embodiment of the sun gods, visible to all mankind.

Behind him is the nebulous cloud, the pure matter from which the stars are made. Thoth is the messenger of the gods. In particular he is the voice of the creator, it is he who is responsible for the execution of the will of Amun. All the powers of the Universe are within his domain.

In his hands he holds two white wands, one lotus tipped, the other papyrus tipped. These are the heraldic plants of Upper and Lower Egypt. Each wand has a serpent entwined around it. The way in which he holds the wands indicates the source and the destination of the power that flows through him. It comes from the sun above and is channelled down to the earth below. He manifests the divine will on the material plain. He is the teacher who instructs mankind in the ways of the gods.

Interpretation

This card represents the intellect, its ability to probe and examine the environment and its power to change and transform that environment if it is found wanting. Productive thought, creative ideas, the mind put to constructive use. Self-confidence and belief in oneself. Practical knowledge as opposed to theory. The ability to organize people, time and events, to plan things in a way that is of benefit to all concerned. Skill in the spheres of business and commerce. Someone engaged in overseas trade. Communication, diplomacy and negotiation, perhaps on the behalf of another. A spiritual leader, one in receipt of divine guidance. There is skill perhaps combined with cunning. The medical or veterinary professions. A natural healer. A time of new opportunities or beginnings. New doors opening. The first decisive step along the road of progress.



II THE HIGH PRIESTESS



Letter

Gimel

Element

Moon

Colour

Blue

Title

Priestess of the Silver Star

II • THE HIGH PRIESTESS

On the surface this is a card of purity, but within the wider bounds of this idea lies the concept of things hidden or concealed. The High Priestess is the receptacle of secret knowledge and wisdom, the mysteries which will only be revealed when the candidate is suitably prepared. She is the immaculate queen of heaven.

Isis, the lunar goddess, was one of the most popular of all Ancient Egyptian deities. She was the sister and wife of Osiris. The High Priestess is the higher spiritual counterpart of the earthly Empress. The High Priestess is the middle pillar on the Tree of Life.

Her robe is blue, the colour traditionally associated with the High Priestess card. It is a symbolic colour of the moon, and in Christian iconography the colour of the Virgin Mary. It denotes truth, revelation, wisdom, chastity, prudence, piety, peace and contemplation. It is the colour of the waters and of the sky.

The ankh represents the combining in a single form of male and female symbols, the union and unification of the sexes. It is

the key to the mysteries. The mystical union of heaven and earth. The marriage of Isis and Osiris. Its colour is menstrual red. The papyrus roll represents knowledge as yet unrevealed. It is the book of the law. As with the whole card, the papyrus represents Gnosis – it is the Word.

The dove is one of the sacred birds of Isis, a representation of submissive innocence, purity and virginity. It is white (purity again), the colour of the moon. Conversely, it is the holy spirit, the agent of divine impregnation. Through the action implied by the dove, the virgin becomes the mother, Priestess becomes the Empress, the idea becomes manifest on the earthly plain.

This is the first throne depicted in the cards of the Major Arcana. In Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs some pictures represented sounds. The picture of a throne represented the sound 'Aset' or 'Eset'; this was the name by which Isis was known. The throne is the physical embodiment of Isis.

Astrologically this card corresponds to the moon. It is a feminine symbol. The moon is a ruler of the subconscious mind, governing insight, instinct and intuition rather than logic and rationality. As the moon she is the visible reflection of the divine light.

A veil of silver-grey cloth hangs between the pillars, concealing the horizon directly behind the High Priestess. It is decorated with images of lotus flowers. The veil itself symbolizes the darkness before dawn, the darkness that will be cast aside or rent by the rising sun. It represents the state before enlightenment, the promise of the revelation of forthcoming initiation. The veil also suggests the concealed entrance to the subconscious levels of the psyche. Like many other elements in this card the veil is also an emblem of virginity.

Interpretation

The card suggests that insight into problems produces a solution. Hidden knowledge. A change for the better. The favourable influence of a woman. Intuition and psychic experiences. Purity. Imagination, dreams, perhaps sometimes even nightmares. Hypnosis. Spiritual rather than mundane interests. The High Priestess is the bride before the wedding.



III THE EMPRESS



Letter

Daleth

Element

Venus

Colour

Emerald Green

Title

Daughter of the Mighty Ones

III • THE EMPRESS

The Empress is the card of Venus, signifying love, fruitfulness and motherhood. She is the great mother, the earth mother, the archetypal woman, pregnant with potential. Although the complement of the Emperor, she is in many ways independent of him – he relies more on her than she does on him. She is much more universal.

The figure of Hathor is shown wearing a green dress, as this is the colour attributed to this card. It is the traditional colour of Venus. She was known to the Ancient Egyptians as the 'lady of Malachite', a green stone. Her name means 'house of Horus' – in the myths she is the mother of the sun god. She was a goddess of joy and love, of music, dance and song. Hathor is the maternal and material aspect of Isis, and as such she is the wife of Osiris.

On the table the statue of Bast the cat goddess indicates Hathor's relationship with Sekhmet. In some myths the two goddesses are interchangeable. Bast was originally a lion goddess herself, later she became a gentler, more benign form of Sekhmet. Cats were considered to be the enemy of the snake, and therefore

were allies of Ra against his adversary Apophis. In the markings on the cat's head, the Ancient Egyptians saw the outline of the scarab beetle, one of the forms of the sun god. Bast was the goddess of plenty, the mistress of pleasure; like Nekhebet, she was the patroness of women and children.

The garden represents paradise, the home of the creator. The wall symbolizes the sacred enclosure of the womb, safe and protective. On the wall surrounding the garden the figure of her child Horus can be seen. In the background the primal hill stands outlined against the sky.

The door is a powerful symbol in many cultures representing hope and opportunity, the passing from one state to another, birth and rebirth, liberation. Paul Foster Case describes this card as the Womb or Door of Life. In the wall that surrounds the garden there is a doorway, corresponding to Daleth. The door is a feminine symbol and in this context the card has been described as the 'Gate of Heaven'. The Empress is the door to the new age. Above the door is carved the winged solar disk, symbolizing the sun crossing the threshold of dawn at the birth of a new day.

The table is decorated with ankhs, symbols of life. On the table stands a lotus-chalice and a clay vessel representing the potential of stored seed. Once sown this same seed germinates and becomes the rich harvest.

Interpretation

The Empress is a motherly figure providing maternal care, domestic stability and happiness. Generally this is a highly beneficial card signifying archetypal motherliness and maturity, she is ruled by her unconscious instincts. She is Venus, feminine, receptive and loving, responding to natural emotion with compassion and understanding. She represents mother earth, beauty and fruitfulness. Proliferous and fertile. A mature woman, kind and gentle. Health and nourishment. Sensual sexuality through pure natural feeling. A true appreciation for the civilizing effect woman has upon mankind.



Letter

He

Element

Aries

Colour

Scarlet

Titles

Sun of the Morning

Chief Among the Mighty

IV • THE EMPEROR

The Emperor is the male counterpart of the Empress. He represents the masculine forces of the universe, but his strength is transient without the complementary power of the Empress.

The card shows the sun god Amun-Ra, clothed in scarlet and gold. The Emperor is associated with the astrological sign of Aries, which rules the head and face. The procreative powers of the card are suggested by the Ram head mask. The ram in Egypt was seen as a symbol of fertility.

The sign is ruled by Mars, the symbol of which he bears on his chest, and the Sun is exalted in Aries. The combination of Mars and the Sun is reflected in the overall colour scheme, the golden orange of the Sun and the red of Mars. As a sun god he is crowned with the solar disk. The beard was the Egyptian symbol of kingship and virility.

The god sits in the desert upon his golden throne, the seat of the Emperor's authority. The four legs of the throne terminate in animals' feet, stressing the stability of his rule, which in turn rest upon cylinders of gold. Four is the number of the card, and it is

the pythagorean number of perfection, justice and the earth.

Placed as it is upon the cubic stone, the throne is between heaven and earth, symbolizing the traditional semi-divine nature of the god-king. The cubic stone, almost completely covered by the shifting sands, represents the Emperor's control over matter. The stone is a symbol of stability, durability and the eternal, it is the solid foundation of his rule. Being a cube, it represents truth, as it appears the same when viewed from each side.

The dry cliffs in the desert show the arid sterility of his purely masculine world, which is divorced from the balancing influence of the Empress.

Interpretation

The Emperor is the adult male, a fatherly figure with strong paternal qualities. The card represents strength, the state, authority and power, and the sort of administration that exists within rigid organized systems of beaurocracy. Systems that are inflexible and unable to adapt to any special requirements of those being processed by it.

He gets what he wants through force, energy and military strength. An outgoing extravert personality. The adventurer. The Emperor represents the power of the will, unlike the power of feelings and love seen in the Empress. He is rational, unemotional and lacking in tenderness. Whilst he is able to destroy the opposition, he is strongly protective of his own kind.

The Emperor relies on his own resources to overcome physical restrictions. His decisions are based directly on his experiences and direct observation rather than on intuition, on which he places no trust whatsoever. He lives in a world of logic, not of imagination, reacting to events as they occur around him, perhaps without too much consideration or planning for the future. Although etymologically unconnected with the title of the card, the Emperor is an empiricist. He tends not to think very far ahead and as a result may be surprised by unforeseen events. He is the archetypal father figure – Jung's animus, or the horned god of pagan religions.



Letter

Vau

Element

Taurus

Colour

Red Orange

Title

Magus of the Eternal

V• THE HIEROPHANT

The Hierophant represents the open face of religion, concealing nothing. His doctrine is orthodox, his theology is worldly. He is the leader of the many, whereas the High Priestess is of the few. He may actually become that which he symbolizes, uniting the microcosm with the macrocosm, thus being the vehicle of religious expression rather than religion itself. His doctrine is dogmatic rather than inspirational.

The Hierophant is Osiris, the Egyptian god of the Underworld. He is the husband of Isis, the High Priestess. The white part of the crown worn by Osiris was the crown of Upper Egypt, known as the Hedjet. It was thought to embody the protective powers of Nekhebet, the personification of Southern Egypt. The feathers mounted at the sides are emblems of righteousness, and when worn with these feathers the white crown became the Atef crown, which was almost exclusive to Osiris. Mounted on the front is the protective Uraeus.

The flail in his left hand is made of a handle with three hanging parts. This suggests the triplicity of Isis, Osiris and Horus. It is

decorated in three colours – the red of Horus, the blue of Isis and gold of Osiris. The crook in his right hand is a symbol of his rule.

The outer robe of the Hierophant is red-orange, the symbolic colour of this card. Beneath he wears the white robe of purity, signifying that underneath the outward show of his belief lies the purity of its foundation.

Immediately in front of Osiris is the Djed. The Djed was itself the symbol of Osiris and is said to represent his backbone. It is the hieroglyph representing stability. The ceremonial act of 'raising the Djed'; was performed at the beginning of the reign of each Pharaoh. The ceremony re-enacted the resurrection of the god and his triumph over his great enemy, Set. In accordance with the concept of sympathetic magic, stability and good fortune were thus conferred upon the Pharaoh.

Inscribed upon the Djed in blue are the hieroglyphs of the eye and the throne. Together they form the name 'Asar', the Egyptian name of Osiris, which meant literally 'seat of the eye'.

The throne is raised upon a dais, the front edge of which is decorated with hieroglyphs. The dais lifts the Hierophant above the level of his followers. It is the first step on the ascent to Heaven.

Behind the throne is Apis, the most important of the sacred bulls of Egypt, who was believed to join with Osiris after death to become Osiris-Apis. This formed the basis of the later Serapis. This god, a composite deity, combined attributes of a number of gods – Osiris was merged with the Apis bull of Memphis, together with elements of the Greek god Zeus and Dionysus.

Kneeling before the Hierophant are the gods Horus and Isis. They have adopted the ritualized pose of veneration.

Interpretation

The card represents spiritual advancement, perhaps long orthodox lines. It is conformity, the way of the masses, popular belief and common sense. The established Church; religious matters. Conventional moral codes. The reunion of opposing principles.



Letter

Zain

Element

Gemini

Colour

Orange

Titles

Children of the Voice

Oracle of the Mighty Gods

VI • THE LOVERS

This is a card of love, a love that will transcend all obstacles. Related to this idea is the second theme of the card, a fall which will ultimately result in (and indeed is necessary to) progress. A loss that brings gain, as the expulsion from Eden brought about the liberation of mankind.

The two gods in this card are Tefnut and Shu, twin children, the first beings created by Amun-Ra. Tefnut was the goddess of moisture, and Shu the god of air. As husband and wife they were the parents of Geb and Nuit, the earth and the heavens. In Egyptian mythology Shu was said to hold apart his children; he was the air separating heaven from earth. This can be seen carved upon the wall behind the two trees. The myths go on to explain that the children of Tefnut and Shu longed for children, but were denied the opportunity by their father. Shu proclaimed that, having given birth to the stars and plants, Nuit would not bear further children in any month of the year. Hearing this, Thoth – who had divided the year into twelve equal parts of thirty days – came to the couple's aid. In a game of chance he won five days

from the moon. These were added to the year, but belonged to no month. So it was on these days that the gods Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys and Horus were born.

This myth is alluded to on the wall behind the Gods. Shu holds Nuit from the reach of Geb. At each side are images of Thoth, who came to the aid of Geb and Nuit. Thoth is the Egyptian precursor of the Roman god Mercury.

In Egyptian astrology the sign of Gemini was represented by the twin deities of Tefnut and Shu. In the Lovers card the goddess Tefnut wears an orange dress. Orange is the colour of this card, being the hue of Gemini. The straps of Tefnut's dress are purple, decorated with yellow disks, alluding to air – the element of Gemini. She holds in her right hand the blue lotus cup, the watery symbol of womanhood. Beside her stands Shu. The hieroglyph for his name was the feather, which he wears in his head-band. The feather signifies truth and was also the emblem of Ma'at. His orange wand is the Waas sceptre. The bracelet on his right upper arm is red, and on his left lower arm is one of white. His belt is white and yellow (the colour of Mercury).

At either side of the card stand trees. To the left is the tree of life, its branches laden with 12 red apples and where a serpent basks in the warmth of the sun. To the right is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A sword rests against the sandy bank. This is the sword of Zain and is the emblem of the element air, representing the intellect. The sword is a two-edged weapon, it can cut both ways.

The mountain in the background of the card reminds us of the primal hill.

Interpretation

The card suggests a choice made from the heart, not the mind. It provides an insight into partnerships. Important decisions to be made leading to new opportunities.

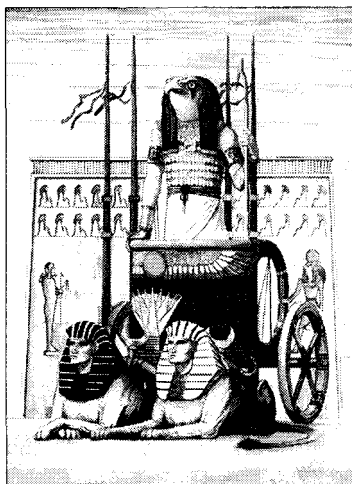
Innocence and youth uncontaminated by earthly desire. Purity. The intellect rules or replaces the passions. In this card there is also a suggestion of the hand of fate.

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TAROT



CLIVE BARRETT

TAKES THE CLASSIC TAROT FULL CIRCLE
AND BACK TO THE LAND OF
ITS ANCESTORS



Letter
Cheth

Element
Cancer

Colour
Amber

Titles
Child of the Power of Water
Lord of the Triumph of Life

VII • THE CHARIOT

The Chariot signifies successful action that wins results. It is the victory and triumph that leads to kingship. He is the initiate who has passed through the trials of the physical and rational worlds. He is the triumph of the mind. However, he rules over the external world only and has no knowledge or understanding of spiritual things or the internal world of the mind. His liberation goes no further than logical understanding, within the limits of which he is ultimately held captive. The mysteries of the High Priestess lie forever beyond his understanding. He rules in his own right, not because he is the son of his father. Rights of inheritance have no bearing here.

Both literally and symbolically he has complete control over his surroundings. His chariot will transport him to wherever he desires, but he also has the power to change his physical environment at will.

The card is illustrated showing the god Horus. Originally in Ancient Egypt there were two gods of this name, but as their natures were so similar even the Egyptians appear to have had

difficulty differentiating between them. Eventually they became merged into a single deity, so Horus the son of Osiris and Isis became equated with Horus the Elder (the brother of Osiris), an aspect of Ra. Horus was the posthumous son of Osiris. He was magically conceived of Isis as she hid in the darkness of the night, concealed from the searching eye of Set, her husband's murderer. Swiftly growing to his full strength, Horus sought out Set and avenged his father's murder.

The card combines the opposing forces of lunar and solar power. The two eyes of Horus were the embodiments of the two luminaries. His right eye was the eye of the sun, his left that of the moon. The two forces achieve balance in the Chariot, but only on the earthly plane, where there is no evidence of solar creativity or the spirituality and imagination of the moon.

The two human-headed sphinxes await his command, ready at a moment's notice to transport him onward. One sphinx wears a black headdress and red collar, and his arms are crossed; the other sphinx wears white with a green collar. They are held under a horned yoke, which is decorated with two silver crescent moons, horns uppermost. The two sphinxes represent the horizons of the east and the west.

The sky is amber, the traditional astrological colour of Cancer.

Interpretation

The card points towards the result of action, but provides little indication of the form that action should take. The action suggested may be positive and deliberate, conceived with a specific aim, but as the Chariot is ruled by the moon, the will of the subconscious cannot be excluded.

Progress, success made through endeavour. Taking a firm control of one's circumstances, to change that which one finds undesirable. Self-confidence and good health. A practical, but perhaps not an imaginative solution to problems. There is a suggestion of moving to another location.



Letter

Teth

Element

Leo

Colour

Yellow

Title

Daughter of the Flaming Sword

VIII• STRENGTH

The card symbolizes control over potential destructive power, achieving a balance between the opposites of passivity and aggression. Many of the cards of the Major Arcana bring together opposites. Here the female subdues the male. It produces creative power, the enjoyment of displayed strength, ecstasy and divine intoxication of fire.

Sekhmet, whose name means 'powerful' or 'mightiest' and one of whose titles was Lady of the Flame, was daughter of the sun god Ra. On one occasion it was in his name that she was instructed to punish the sinful mankind. Once unleashed, her destruction exceeded his intentions, almost destroying the whole of the human race.

The lion is the sacred animal of Sekhmet. In alchemy the lion generally represents the uncontrolled forces of nature in the real or subjective worlds, but here the goddess has total control over him. It is the animal of Leo, the astrological sign associated with this card. The Egyptian sigel for this sign resembles the serpent which appears at the foot of the card.

The snake or serpent has solar, sexual, funerary and power symbolism. As a subterranean dweller, the snake is in contact with the Underworld, (see Apophis – card XV The Devil), where the serpent is the enemy of the sun. However in this card it represents the supreme divine power of the gods.

The Uraeus, the rearing cobra, worn on the brow of the goddess represents both the destructive and protective power of fire. Apart from its consuming aspect, fire has the power to cleanse, and consequently was regarded as a symbol of purity and purification. It had the power to defeat Set, destroy evil and exorcise demons.

The background of the card shows the barren sun-seared desert, where the earth is almost totally purified of life. The only living forms that can exist within its harsh conditions must hide from the direct heat of the sun by seeking concealment between rocks or underground.

Interpretation

The card suggests control of passions and emotions, the suppression of undesirable thoughts and actions. It is self-discipline. The combined power of courage and strength in overcoming difficulties. The card indicates reaching maturity, it brings the end of the rashness of youth. Perhaps initiation, a trial by fire.

Gentleness quietens the severity of the beast. Coming to terms with one's instinctive urges. The subjugation of the lion stands for control of the passions, pride, ignorance and base instincts in general. It is discipline.

Reconciliation with an enemy either internally – perhaps regarding one's baser instincts, the gain of moral control – or externally with human enemies. This reconciliation may take the form of reaching an agreement, overcoming strife, or it may simply be an acceptance of the state of things as they are. This brings forth concepts of diplomacy or patience and endurance.

There is also a suggestion that the enemy within should be pacified before attempting to tackle the enemy without.



IX THE HERMIT



Letter

Yod

Element

Virgo

Colour

Yellowish Green

Titles

Magus of the Voice of Power

Prophet of the Eternal

IX • THE HERMIT

The searching light and the light of the world. The Hermit represents both the quest and the goal. The Absolute is the source of all things and is the goal of existence. The Hermit lights the way for those who would follow, but it is the Hermit himself that they seek. The card is more than simply the path, it is also (if only those who walk it knew) the destination, attainment. The light is a beacon, the bright light of wisdom in the all-pervading darkness of ignorance. The reason which stands up against fear. The mysteries – like the identity of this card – are forever concealed from those who are unprepared. It is a sign of what may be achieved, 'Where I am, so may you be.'

Virgo is the astrological sign attributed to this card. Virgo is ruled by the planet Mercury – Thoth the Magician. The Virgo attribution together with the letter Yod suggests fertility, symbolized by the ear of wheat in the Hermit's right hand. Also in this hand is a wand, again a symbol of procreative power. The Mercurial symbolism is embodied in the apes of Thoth and the mask of Anubis. Thoth was the Egyptian equivalent of Mercury

and in the myths Anubis serves many Mercurial functions.

The face of the Hermit is hooded. The deity's identity is concealed. The Hermit's hooded cloak is green, the colour of this card and of Osiris. This suggests the journey made by Osiris, when he left Egypt to take the knowledge of civilization to the rest of the world. The card also suggests the searching of Isis, following the death of Osiris.

The darkness of the cave represents not only the subconscious, but also irrational fears and ignorance. Against this the light of wisdom, logic and knowledge strives to exist. It is a small light in the world, fragile and at the mercy of the forces of darkness.

Shining like a star, the lamp's flame takes the form of the letter Yod. Yod is the secret fire. The meaning of this letter is 'hand' – it is the hand that reaches out in the dark. It may be the helping hand of assistance, or it could be the blindly groping hand of the lost. The card is both of these.

The hole in the ground at the front of the card is the entrance to the Underworld. It is the Abyss. One of the main duties of the Mercurial gods was to guide the soul through the Underworld. In many myths the dead are led out of the Underworld and so back to life. Out of the darkness into the light.

Interpretation

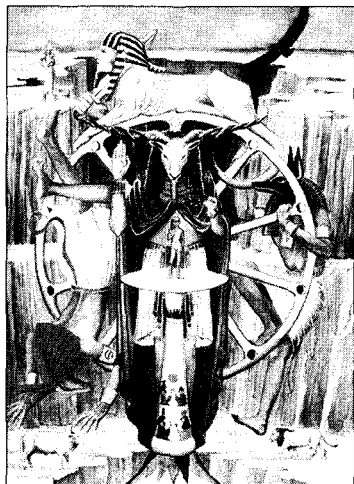
Here there are warnings and advice, there is a need for caution. A time of withdrawal and isolation, either enforced or voluntary. The guidance of foresight and wisdom.

That which is sought may be much closer than was previously thought. Something which has been overlooked or mislaid. Perhaps something which, although in clear sight, has not actually been observed.

A guiding light on a difficult journey. One should be wary, however, this may be of the light of the will-o-the-wisp, which delighted in misleading unsuspecting travellers.



X THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE.



Letter
Kaph

Element
Jupiter

Colour
Violet

Title
Lord of the Forces of Life

X • THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

This card illustrates the concept of the universe in a state of perpetual change. Like a machine of infinite size, driving ever onward, it is blind and unstoppable. Eventually it destroys all it creates. The unchallengeable progress of time, the absolute certainty of the unswerving course of fate. Although to earthly perceptions randomness may be evident, there is an absence of chance in all things – the undeniable fatality of life. This should however not be considered to be negative for it has no polarity. It is neither good nor evil, but is impersonal and unemotional. The will of the universe is unintelligible to us, a force beyond our understanding. Even the gods were subject to the laws of the universe.

While the above may be true on the higher planes, it is not a valid reason for inaction on the lower plane. Here ideas of self determination should not be abandoned.

The central figure of this card is the spiral-horned, ram-headed god, Khnumn. He was the god of fertility and creation, he formed humanity on his potter's wheel from the clays of the earth. In the

act of creation he allotted each individual a period of time on earth, beyond which no man could live. His right hand is open to reveal his palm. His left hand lifts up from shaping his creation. Before him is the potter's wheel. On the golden turntable is Harpocrates, who stands with a finger to his lips for he is the child of silence. Newly born, he wears the side-lock of youth. He represents mankind.

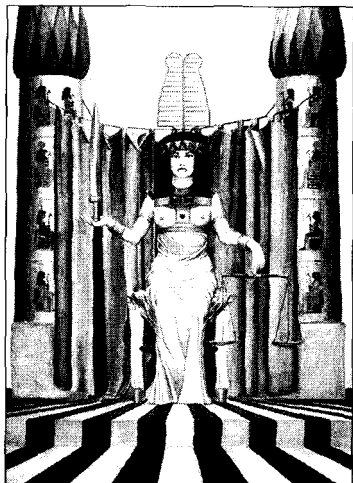
Behind Khnum is the greater wheel; like the potter's wheel it is gold. It has ten spokes, the number of the ten sephiroth, to represent the manifestation of the universe.

The god Set, also known as Typhon, has lost his grasp and is falling from the wheel. His hair is red, as are his belt and ceremonial tail. Anubis, sometimes known by his composite name Hermanubis (displaying the associations between the gods Hermes and Anubis), is climbing up the wheel. His headdress is blue. Around his waist is a yellow and blue belt, with a yellow ceremonial tail. Anubis was the son of Set. As the son climbs on one side of the wheel, the father falls from the other. The sphinx rests motionless at the apex.

Kaph means the palm of the hand. It is in the lines of the palm that fortune is revealed. It is the palm that spins the wheel (both the greater and the lesser) and the hand that shapes mankind. Jupiter, the planet of this card, is the bringer of good fortune.

Interpretation

The Wheel of Fortune tells of changes for the better, motion, improvement. Good fortune and prosperity are indicated. Perhaps starting a new cycle of events, overall the unfolding future looks good. There are however fluctuations of fortune and one must be aware that fortune can fall as well as rise. An overwhelming feeling of destiny. Mindlessly following the latest trend, carried along by the crowd. There is a strong sense of continuity, the circumstances of the present are built upon the foundation of the deeds of the past. An understanding of history may help to make sense of the present. This is a card of evolution and transience.



Letter
Lamed

Element
Libra

Colour
Emerald Green

Titles
Daughter of the Lords of Time
Ruler of the Balance

XI • JUSTICE

This is a card of justice on an earthly level, it points towards the principle of reaping what one sows. Action is followed by reaction. This is different to the idea of spiritual justice, as described by the Wheel of Fortune.

The former concept is easier to grasp. Its mechanisms are visible and understandable. Work is rewarded, idleness is not, there is a clear order of cause and effect. The latter, however, is invisible and remote. It has no obvious logic, no apparent cause, only the effects are to be seen. This is essentially a card of reaping one's just rewards, or being punished for one's errors (akin to the Newtonian law that every action has an equal and opposite reaction).

A further concept suggested by this card is that of balance in general. A balance of opposites within ourselves, of good and evil, of right and wrong. A balance of the conscious and subconscious parts of the mind. The sun and the moon.

Representing world order is Ma'at, the Egyptian goddess of truth and justice, the balance of nature and cosmic harmony. Her

priests were the judges in Ancient Egypt, they wore a mask of the goddess when pronouncing their judgements. She was the personification of the laws of existence.

Ma'at is shown here in an emerald green dress, the colour of this card, with a blue belt. Her bracelets, red and green, represent the opposing forces of Mars and Venus. Her crown is the twin feathers of truth. A sword is balanced, point uppermost in the palm of her hand. In her left hand the scales of fate hang. The inference of the sword and the scales is the same – only Ma'at herself knows which way the sword will fall and how the scales will tilt. Ma'at has an important role in the ceremony of the Weighing of the Heart, in which the hearts of men are carefully weighed against the feather of truth as a test of their goodness on earth and their right to eternal life.

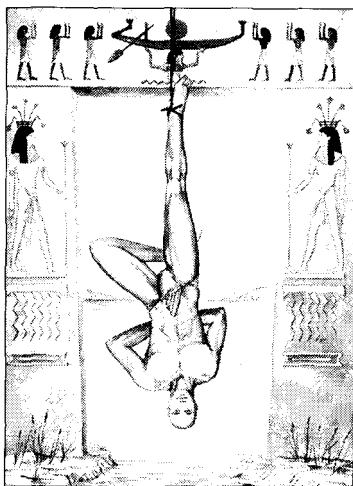
The floor is the yellow and purple, the symbolic colours of the element air.

Interpretation

This is a card of truth and equality. It represents judging or the act of judgement. Legal matters or an encounter with the legal system. A time for arbitration and agreement, the achievement of harmony. There may be documents to inspect or to sign. External influences. It suggests the Eastern philosophy of Karma. Balance and compensation. A clear mind capable of logical and rational thought.

An idea of conscience is also indicated by this card. That which drives one to do what one instinctively knows is right, and generates the guilt either of incorrect action or of omission. Looking back over one's life, seeing how one thing led on to another, and how one has arrived in one's present circumstances. A state of imbalance to be redressed.

Depending upon the circumstances of the questioner, this may be a card of warning or of reassurance.



Letter
Mem

Element
Water

Colour
Deep Blue

Title
Spirit of the Mighty Waters

XII • THE HANGED MAN

The Hanged Man suggests states of intermediacy. He occupies the middle of the road, poised between two choices or outcomes. The Hierophant is the mediator between heaven and earth, suggesting movement between the two, but the Hanged Man is suspended unmoving between them, unable or unwilling to move in either direction.

A second theme of this card is that of self-sacrifice – he has chosen to be hung in this way. He is in full control of his situation and sees his action as necessary for his personal progress. Osiris, his earthly works completed, voluntarily goes to his death (as did Christ). This is the only path of advancement.

The Hanged Man himself is wearing only a blue triangular loincloth. His left leg crosses behind his right. His arms are bound behind his back. Despite his predicament the hanged man's face displays no sign of discomfort. He hangs by two green ropes, which form the shape of an inverted ankh, suggesting a link between this and The World card.

Beneath him the waters of the Nile have found their way

through the doorway, washing away the sandy earth.

The Hanged Man is suspended between heaven and earth, denoting his state of flux, for he is of neither place. He rests in a state of limbo, neither alive nor dead. This was the state of Osiris before he was admitted to the Underworld.

The lintel of the doorway is decorated with a solar barque – this is the *Manjet*, the sacred vessel of the sun. It is supported on the shoulders of the god *Nun*, who is waist deep in the Nile. Following the creation of the universe *Nun* became associated with the Nile. He is flanked by six men, their arms in the ritualized position of worship.

The pillars show the Nile god *Hapi*, with a lotus staff. Traditionally shown as an overweight man with a woman's breasts, *Hapi* was a deity of abundance. His headdress is made of the watery papyrus plant. Despite his association with the Nile, he was not believed by the Ancient Egyptians to be responsible for its annual inundation. Below *Hapi* is the hieroglyph for rainwater, beneath which is the general sign for a body of water.

The Hanged Man is suspended upside-down as was the crucified *St Peter*, who considered himself unworthy of a Christ-like death. (There are links therefore between this card and the Hierophant, who according to one strand of tradition is thought to represent *St Peter*, along with his keys to the gates of heaven.)

Interpretation

The interpretations of this card are varied. There is the concept of voluntary sacrifice for a belief or an ideal. The feeling that one must give in order to receive. This may be taken to indicate a desire to exchange material comforts for spiritual advancement. Sudden realization after a period of thought or meditation.

It is a card of intuition, which may manifest in divination or prophecy. There is also a suggestion of indecision or a difficult choice between two possibilities.



XIII DEATH



Letter

Nun

Element

Scorpio

Colour

Green

Titles

Child of the Great Transformers

Lord of the Gates of Death

XIII • DEATH

This card does *not* represent death in the usual sense of the word. It is not the death of a person, but the ending of a state of being. It signifies a transition from one state to another. This is a card of progress from a lower to a higher plain, suggesting rebirth, change and transformation – The ascent of the spirit. The card marks an escape from the suspended condition of the Hanged Man, a release from the tensions of the previous two cards. The creation of the new and the destruction of the old. A change in the level of consciousness.

Anubis, the god depicted on this card, is the son of Nephthys and either Set or Osiris (the myths are uncertain on this point). He was the god of the dead for many years but when Osiris assumed that role, Anubis came to be seen as his assistant. He assisted Isis and Nephthys in the embalment of the body of Osiris. He was the god of the strip of land that lay between the rich cultivated soil of Osiris and the sterile desert of Set. He was the ruler of the Necropolis. Tying his belt is the knot known as the Tet, or the blood of Isis. His cuirass is made of fish-like scales of iron.

The god holds an Ankh which is green, the colour of resurrection. In his right hand he holds the sacred Peseshkef, a fish-tailed implement used to open the mouth of the deceased. The Opening of the Mouth Ceremony was thought to magically restore to the mummy the full use of his senses, thus preparing the deceased for the life to come in the Underworld.

On the ground before him is a red scorpion, the colour of Mars, the ruling planet of the sign of Scorpio. The scorpion is also the emblem of the goddess Selket. She was a protector of both the living and the dead and was one of the four goddesses who watched over the dead body of Osiris (together with Isis, Nephthys and Neit).

The four earthenware jars are known as Canopic Jars. In these vessels the dried organs of the deceased were stored having been individually removed from the body; by this means their decomposition was prevented. Each of the jars bore the head of one of the four sons of Horus. These were Imset, Qebhsenuf, Duamutef and Hapi who had the heads of a man, jackal, falcon and ape respectively. The contents of the four jars were the liver, intestines, stomach and lungs.

The sarcophagus is the one made by Set with the intention of trapping and killing Osiris. On the front are images of the gods Anubis, Thoth, Horus, Ma'at, Isis and Nephthys. They are performing the rites of mummification and resurrection. In the bottom panel the Ba, or soul, may be seen rising from the body of Osiris.

The wall painting shows Anubis leading the deceased into the Hall of Judgement, and the presence of Osiris. Above are the gods who witness the Weighing of the Heart.

Interpretation

This card indicates the casting off of the past. A change of thought or approach. Now is a time for looking to the future. A transformation of some kind. This is a turning point in one's life. There may be a change of personality, possibly a complete change in one's way of life or circumstances. There is a new and brighter view of the future. In general the changes indicated by this card will be for the better.



Letter
Samek

Element
Sagittarius

Colour
Blue

Titles
Daughter of the Reconcilers
Bringer Forth of Life

XIV • TEMPERANCE

Temperance is a card of harmony of the psychic and material worlds. The Hanged Man is suspended between the elements, but Temperance has one foot on the earth and one in the water. She unites the elements, merges them naturally into a single whole. She pours the essences of life from one vessel to the other, signifying the free transference between the plains, the mixing of fluids. She stands upon the path to other worlds. The card symbolizes the equilibrium of opposites, the meeting and resolution of contradictions. Only through harmony within may one achieve spiritual progress. When the waters of the Nile reach the dry fields of the earth, each barren in themselves, together they will create life. Following the death of the ego, in the previous card, Temperance fills the void. Consciousness and subconsciousness are now united, providing a firm basis for continuing progress.

On another level Temperance represents the passage of time, in which time flows as a liquid from the vessel of the future to that of the past.

Nephthys was the wife of Set (who is seen in the following Devil card) and the mother of Anubis. She was depicted in paintings of the Hall of Judgement standing with Isis behind the throne of Osiris. Her marriage to Set balances the marriage of Isis and Osiris, and she assisted Isis in her search for the lost body of Osiris.

Nephthys wears the vulture headdress of Nekhebet, at the front of which there are three solar Uraeae. Her head is crowned by the hieroglyphic representation of her name, which literally translated means 'Lady of the Mansion'.

She holds two jars in her hands, pouring from silver to gold, the contents are free to mix. The two vessels are decorated with hieroglyphs of her name and the phrase 'life, strength and health'. According to one myth it was Osiris who was the father of Anubis. The story tells of Nephthys encouraging him to drink large quantities of wine, after which she seduced him. In the pyramid texts, Osiris is known as the 'Lord of the Wine'.

Here Nephthys is winged as, like Isis her sister, she could take the form of a hawk. Her wings reveal her astral associations. The blue associated with this card appears around her eyes and as the colour of her gown.

A bow and arrows lie before her. The bow is an earthly representation of the rainbow of the sky. (The arrow can also be seen at the feet of the High Priestess). The bow and arrows are also the weapons of Sagittarius. The sign Sagittarius is directly opposite that of Gemini. This card is related to that of the Lovers, which is ruled by Gemini, but here the intellect and the passions work together in perfect harmony. As this is the meeting place of opposites, some say that Temperance is androgynous.

Interpretation

This card indicates feelings of optimism. There is a way out of present difficulties. Opposition may be transformed into harmony. Co-operation or a truce between adversaries. The agreement of opposites; reconciliation of these with differing ideas or opinions. A balance is achieved.

A harmonious partnership or relationship. Economy and moderation in all things. Profitable management of resources.



Letter

Ayin

Element

Capricorn

Colour

Indigo

Titles

Lord of the Forces of Matter

Child of the Forces of Time

XV • THE DEVIL

This card has the stored earthen strength of creation, captive energy in material form whose power is held firmly in check. The free flow of the strength is blocked leading to impotence. The potential has to be released in order to be of advantage to the holder. The restriction may be self-induced, imaginary or perhaps unquestionably accepted. It could be as a result of a fear of change. There is contentment with the status quo, a fear of the devil one does not know. Ignorance or alternative possibilities holds one back. Needless inhibitions. Bondage, accompanied with the promise of release. The Devil displays great tension, forces pulling in many directions; in this sense it is the opposite of the previous card.

Set is possibly the most complicated of all the Ancient Egyptian gods. The form of his head is based upon that of no known animal. He has a long curved snout and erect ears with flattened tips. His flesh is described variously from sun-bleached white to heavily tanned. Known as the Red God, he was the god of the burning desert that bordered upon the fertile lands of Osiris. (Red-haired people are traditionally thought to be of a fiery temperament.) His

followers, who the Greeks called Typhonians, were said to be recognized by the redness of their eyes. In general Set resembles the Devil residing in the fiery hell of Christian myth.

In the picture, Set's hands are poised in the symbolic gesture meaning, 'As above so below.' He holds the wand of Thoth – the caduceus of Mercury.

His domain included the circumpolar stars, those which never set, while Horus ruled the remainder, those that rise and set like the sun. According to some Set represents the destructive part of nature, and in man the conscious violation of the laws of Ma'at.

The great serpent behind the throne is Apophis or Apep. He is the monstrous chief ally of Set in his perpetual war against the gods of the sun. Their weapons are all the things which can conceal the light of the sun – the clouds, mist, rain and the many forms of darkness. Each day at dawn and dusk they together attempt to overcome Horus their enemy. At these times the sky was seen to become dyed red with the blood of the defeated Apophis.

The cabbalistic letter associated with this card is Ayin, which means eye. The eye shown on the plinth is the left eye of the sky god Horus – it is the eye of the moon. Set stole the eye from Horus and swallowed it, and was believed to be responsible for the monthly disappearance of the moon. The Devil's throne is of plain stone; the backrest takes the form of an obelisk, a symbol of male sexuality. Beneath the throne is a tiled floor. Here the tiles are of plain earthen colours, not the blue and grey of the High Priestess.

Indigo is the colour of this card, which may be seen in the colour of the dark night-time sky. The wrists of the man and woman are bound, but their bindings are light and could be easily broken if they so desire.

Interpretation

Bound by one's physical desires, there is temptation towards evil. One who is a slave to materialism. Desires for worldly goods, status or popular recognition. Selfishness. There is a need to suppress one's animal instincts and to control harmful tendencies. Conversely there is a longing to escape from one's inhibitions.



Letter

Pe

Element

Mars

Colour

Scarlet

Title

Lord of the Hosts of the Mighty

XVI • THE TOWER

The Tower denotes the downfall of the house of falsehood, the unreliability of material endeavour. The folly of the intellect when attempting to penetrate the mysteries, it is the destruction of false ideas. The way to spiritual advancement lies in the abandonment of faith in material and intellectual constructions.

The predominant feature of this card is the obelisk, its head (known as a pyramidion) has been struck by a bolt of lightning. Cracks have appeared in the shaft and two figures flee, fearing for their lives. They are the priests of the false religion. Here the monolith carries the hieroglyphs of the eye and the mouth: the eye is the all-seeing eye of Horus whilst the mouth represents the word of god. The combination of the eye and the mouth reminds us of the myth of Set in which he swallowed the eye of Horus – the triumph of night over day. The mouth also represents the entrance to the Underworld.

The defacement of the images of royal figures was a common practice in Ancient Egypt. Once a dynasty had come to an end, the following dynasty was often eager to remove all traces of its

existence, and thereby discourage a rebellion by those still loyal to the family of the old pharaoh.

Lightning is a symbol of spiritual illumination, revelation and realization. It cuts through the dark sky without warning. It is the sudden flash of inspiration. But lightning may bring either enlightenment or destruction, and the two can be interdependent. The devil becomes Lucifer, the light-bearer. It brings release from the mental bondage of the literal word and false interpretation; fanaticism is swept away to reveal tolerance.

The pyramid is ruined, again symbolizing the infallibility of human endeavours – all earthly works eventually turn to dust. This idea is further amplified by the fallen walls and towers of a fortress. The doorway between the towers offers the possibility of escape for those who have the desire to accept it.

The Djed is the sacred emblem of Osiris. Its fallen state in the foreground represents the death of the god, who will be restored to life when the Djed is raised. Its green colour suggests that resurrection is attainable.

The serpent represents the destructive aspects of both Horus and Set, firstly as the destroyer of mankind and secondly as the adversary of the solar light. The dove is the emblem of Isis, standing out bright and knowing against the darkness of human self-delusion. In the darkening sky there is a glimmer of red and gold. This is, depending on whether the card is interpreted positively or negatively, either the coming dawn or the setting sun – a promise or a warning.

Interpretation

The Tower tells of sudden changes. There is a possibility of conflict or destruction, perhaps an unexpected setback. None of these are of necessity undesirable.

The card could indicate a sudden realization or unexpected insight into a subject that one has spent a long time considering. There may be a release from tension that has been building up. It is also the end of the old, the beginning of the new. A change of some kind in the offing. Building upon ill-conceived foundations.



Letter

Tzaddi

Element

Aquarius

Colour

Violet

Titles

Daughter of the Firmament

Dweller Between the Waters

XVII • THE STAR

The Star is a guiding light. It is the calm that follows the storm of the previous card. It is peace and refreshment. The opening of the doors of the mind which until now have been closed, a sign that the seeker is on the correct path.

Isis, crowned with the hieroglyph representing her name, kneels at the bank of the Nile. Her left knee rests on the sand but her foot is on the water. Like many other cards she exists between two states of being. In her hand she holds two jars, the gold and silver vessels of the card Temperance; their contents are now well mixed, constituting a single liquid. She pours out their contents to enrich the waters of the Nile with their magical essence. This card is attributed to Aquarius, the water-bearer.

The bird on this card is the sacred ibis of the god Thoth, one of a number of symbols used to represent the soul.

For the Ancient Egyptians the stars of the Milky Way formed the heavenly equivalent of the river Nile. After death the souls of the departed left the confines of the earth to become stars in the sky, there to shine for all eternity. The stars were the inhabitants

of the Netherworld. These beliefs led them to decorate the inside of their coffin lids with stars, representing the heavens stretching over the corpse.

The mountainous banks of the Nile shown here are the eastern banks, known as Bakhau, over which the sun will eventually rise. Those on the western bank were called Manu, and were thought to mark the entrance to the Underworld.

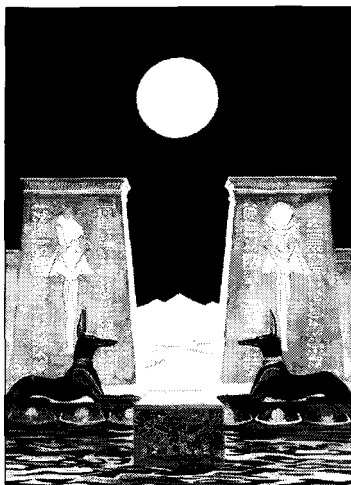
The star of the title is Sirius – Sepdet to the Egyptians (Sothis is the Hellenized form). It is the star of Isis. The same star may be seen in the sky of the High Priestess. Once a year the star rose at dawn with the sun (this was known as the heliacal rising). This happening coincided with the beginning of the inundation, the annual flooding of the Nile. The pyramids were oriented on this star. The neighbouring constellation of seven visible stars which we know as Orion was to the Egyptians the constellation of Osiris. (According to some authorities the pyramids were laid out to a plan which represented on earth the heavenly stars of Orion – thus in the construction of the pyramids Isis and Osiris were united.)

The vault of heaven was personified in the form of the goddess Nuit, known as 'Our Lady of the Stars'. Nuit was thought to give birth to and consume the sun each day.

Interpretation

The Star suggests above all the idea of hope. No matter how bad things may appear, there will always be hope that provides the strength to keep going. Nothing lasts forever, eventually things will improve. There is an ability to stand firm against adversity. The Star is the light at the end of the tunnel, truth unveiled. It represents optimism.

The card suggests the calm after the storm. The air is fresh and cleansed of the burden of the past. This is a time when one's thoughts become clear after a period of confusion. It offers the promise of a brighter future. Confidence is renewed Fulfilment. New and wider horizons are in sight.



Letter
Qoph

Element
Pisces

Colour
Crimson

Titles
Ruler of Flux and Reflux
Child of the Sons of the Mighty

XVIII • THE MOON

The Moon stands for imagination as a separate force to that of the spirit. The pitfalls of faith in intellectualization. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, the mind can only provide a reflection of reality. When we observe the universe, our intellect interprets and recreates it in our minds. Because our minds are inherently limited, any interpretation is necessarily imperfect. All mental processes are prone to error and any attempt to overcome this by the appliance of the mind is likewise flawed. This leads on to the ideas of illusion and delusion, and all things that divide humanity from reality. In the absence of the clear light of the sun, superstition becomes established. It is an adventure into the unknown, accompanied by the fear of the unknown. The Moon represents the glamour of fantasy.

Jackals are the sacred animals of Anubis the moon god which inhabited the lands at the edge of settlements. They lived in the cemeteries, scavenging amongst the bones of the dead. On a lower level the two jackals represent our basic animal nature.

The towers of the sacred pylon guard a gateway. Here is the

threshold between life and death. They are different views of the same. On the towers are the gods Osiris and Khonsu. Osiris is deceased, awaiting the time of his resurrection. Khonsu is also bound in the mummiform wrappings of the dead – his name means the wanderer. He was a moon god and protector against evil spirits.

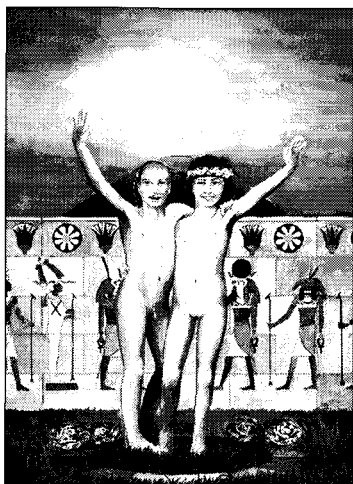
The coffin of Osiris floats on the Nile, yet to be discovered. The image of the scarab lies between the water and the earth. It suggests the mind attempting to rise from the waters of confusion, drawn by the light above. Unfortunately this light is not the true light, merely a pale reflection. The coffin is decorated with pictures of the fish that consumed the lost part of the divided body of Osiris. The fish are also the symbol of Pisces, the sign of this card. Pisces is the last sign of the zodiac, the end of winter, signalling that the sun will soon regain its strength. This card is the gate of resurrection.

The landscape is in a sense sterile like that of the Emperor, but here the presence of the Nile suggests that this is merely a period of dormancy. The path stretches dimly from the gateway to the distant mountains, showing that the seeker is still on the correct route, but must be constantly aware of the risk of straying. To continue he must surrender totally his imperfect conception of reality and seek the true light for his guide. Courage is required to achieve this.

Eclipses of the sun and moon follow a regular and predictable cycle. This is known as the Saronic Cycle, whose period of repetition is 18 years, the number of this card.

Interpretation

Science founders in its own logic. The Moon indicates a period of introspection and quiet reflective thought. Using the mind to explore the limits of the imagination. Prophetic or troublesome dreams, perhaps the witnessing of psychic happenings. Here the intuition succeeds where reason might fail. The falsehood of using reason to solve problems of belief. This card is also warning against the deception of illusion.



Letter

Resh

Element

Sun

Colour

Orange

Title

Lord of the Fire of the World

XIX • THE SUN

This is the long-expected sunrise. The Sun is the brilliant light leading humanity out of ignorance. It lights the journey ahead. On another level this card signifies a simplicity and innocence of wisdom typified by the mind of a child. (The card can also indicate the infancy of man's spiritual and intellectual powers.) The light dispels the darkness and promotes a clarity of thought previously undiscovered. Simplicity brings one nearer to the natural world, closer to the truth. This is the clear true light that the previous cards could only dimly suggest. The card signifies the emancipation and liberation of the new age. The Moon precedes the Sun as night precedes day. The uncertainty of darkness must come before the clarity of light. This is the light of intelligence which burns away the conventions and accepted ideas of the past. Where the Moon illustrated an internal struggle, with the Sun the opposition comes from the rest of mankind who fear the changes that advancement brings.

The children stand together, their arms around each other in friendship, their hands raised in joyous greeting. They represent

mankind relieved of all guilt and hatred. The girl wears a circlet of daisies – the name means literally the ‘day’s eye’, which is the sun. The boy has the side-lock of youth, the traditional Egyptian hairstyle of young boys. They have no clothing, signifying their worldly innocence and purity of spirit.

The sun shines brightly in the orange sky, orange being the colour of this card. This is the golden dawn.

The green hill is far away, within a circling wall. It represents the fertile earth. It is the primal mound of the distant past, the birthplace of the human race. The wall is behind the children, who have escaped its terrestrial confines. Driven by the solar energy they have left the constraints and limitations of humanity. Sin and death are behind them and the grass *has* been found to be greener on this side. Beneath their feet is a rainbow ring formed from the 12 colours of the zodiac, through which the sun annually passes. They stand at the centre of the solar system.

The gods painted on the wall include Amun, Osiris, Ra, Horus and Set. All are gods who played a prominent part in the preceding cards: Amun was the creator god, the subject of the first card, the Fool; in his ram-headed form the solar god Ra was the Emperor; Osiris was the Hierophant; Horus, a further aspect of the sun god, appeared as the driver of the Chariot; finally the god Set was featured on both the Wheel of Fortune and the Devil.

The letter cabbalistically attributed to this card is Resh, meaning head. This refers to the sun, as opposed to the previous card, in which Qoph meant the back of the head, indicating the moon. On the Tree of Life the sun is the planet of the central sephiroth of Tiphereth, also known as beauty. This card shows the positive and constructive aspects of the sun. It should be remembered that, as in the Emperor, the sun is the creator of the deserts. The astrological attribution of this card is the sun.

Interpretation

This card signifies material happiness. A time of prosperity and good fortune. There is great joy and happiness. Success in one’s endeavours. Achievement and recovery from the setbacks of the past. Good health, riches and wealth. A clear perspective of one’s life.



Letter
Shin

Element
Fire

Colour
Orange Scarlet

Title
Spirit of the Primal Fire

XX • JUDGEMENT

Judgement is the lower self answering to the call of the higher. The two levels are drawing together towards the final synthesis. The spiritual and earthly planes are now close. The last constraints of the animal nature falls away. The lost original perfection is about to be restored. This card is the final step towards completion. The realization that the personality is nothing more and nothing less than a facet of the universal consciousness. The individual is a part of the whole, there is no separate existence. A deeply revealing mystical experience. One should be cautious, however, of misinterpreting the call.

Osiris takes his rightful place and calls on his followers to join him. He is winged, showing his transcendent and divine state. His body is transparent on the earthly plane – he has revealed himself to mankind, soon he will be gone. Time is running out for those who would follow, the light is fading, the door closing. An immediate response is essential.

As on the card of the Hierophant, Osiris holds the crook and flail, but here he also has the fiery Waas sceptre. His headdress supports

two red and blue feathers. These colours are repeated in the Uraeus and his collar. His robe of tooth-like feathers is multi-coloured: black is the colour of the Netherworld, green the colour of resurrection and joy, red is vitality and white is purity and sanctity.

There are three people in this card, reflecting the eternal triad, the father, the mother and the child. They have been awoken from their slumbers by Osiris, their natron-stained mummy bindings have fallen away and are cast about them.

The sarcophagi are green and decorated with ankhs. The left coffin bears the image of the human headed Ba-bird. The Ba was the wandering spirit – the soul of the dead. On the central sarcophagus are the raised hands, this is the hieroglyph representing the Ka, the vital life force or the double of the deceased. The final coffin bears the crested ibis which was the Aakh or Khu – the imperishable spirit-soul. The sarcophagi rest on the scarlet earth, suggesting the 'Lake of Fire' of the myths. Across the plain the distant hills are fading from sight. As the spirit rises worldly thoughts and desires become dim and ebb away.

In the clouds above, the gods Thoth and Anubis are present. Anubis holds the scales of Ma'at and an ankh. The scales were central to the Ancient Egyptian concept of judgement. On passing from this life the deceased was examined for his fitness to enter the Netherworld. His heart was placed on the scales and weighed against the Feather of Truth. He then had to swear before the assembled gods and goddesses that he had never committed a sin. If the scales failed to balance then his words were shown to be untrue. There was no room for sinners in heaven so he would be thrown into the waiting jaws of the monster Beby. Thoth, the record keeper in these trials, is shown holding a raised Peseshkef and an ankh.

Interpretation

This is a card of spiritual awakening. New doors are opening, it is a time for positive action. Opportunities should be grasped while they are available. Decisions leading to improvement. There is a change for the better. Energy is renewed, health restored. A new lease of life. Perhaps a prophetic vision or mystical experience.



Letter

Tau

Element

Saturn

Colour

Indigo

Title

Great One of the Night of Time

XXI • THE WORLD

This card represents perfection and completion, the end of time. The union of the soul with the universe. It is true and complete self-awareness. The highest degree of natural perfection has been attained. The return to the blazing radiance of the source. The crowning glory of creation. The card signifies the final end of matter.

The deity pictured on this card is Nuit, the Egyptian mother goddess, Lady of the Stars. Tradition states that the figure shown on the World card is androgynous. In a sense this makes her the reverse of the Hanged Man.

The jar on the head of the goddess represents the womb, but it is also the Egyptian symbol for the heart. Its colours are blue over terracotta – the sky over the earth, Nuit over her husband Geb. Upon the jar is the ankh, showing how life is born from the joining of opposites. The three red solar disks represent the sephirah of Malkuth, Yesod and Tiphareth. This indicates the most direct path on the Tree of Life to Kether. According to the myths, Nuit gave birth to the sun each morning and then consumed it again the following night. This has parallels with the

Roman god Saturn, who fathered and ate his own children.

The violet swirl spirals around the body of the goddess. Violet is the final colour on the visible spectrum, signifying the end of all things. She holds in her hands two wands, the lotus and the papyrus wands of Upper and Lower Egypt. Together they symbolize unification.

The snake is both Apophis and the fire snake of the Hindus. The goddess is standing upon its head showing that here the serpent is under her firm control. It was at the foot of her sacred tree that Apophis was finally defeated by Ra.

Around the goddess is an almond-shaped band divided into the 12 colours of the zodiac; it also suggests a rainbow. The shape is known variously as the Vesica Piscis or Ichthus for its fish-like form. Also termed the Mandorla, it signifies the flame of the spirit. Within it is the egg of creation, as seen on the first card of the deck. The snake is the male counterpart of the Vesica Piscus.

The pyramids represent the hand of man – the earthly materialism which has now been left behind. Their origin is ancient but this is insignificant against the measure of the infinite.

In the four corners of the card, the four living creatures of the elements may be seen. They have appeared previously on other cards (the Hierophant and the Wheel of Fortune), but here they have become part of the fabric of the universe.

Behind the figure of the goddess is the starry sky – this, as mentioned above, was considered to be the body of Nuit.

The Hebrew letter of this card, Tau, means the sign of a T-shaped cross. Here it is embodied in the Egyptian cross or ankh, which appears above the head of the goddess. A cross also forms part of the symbol of Saturn, the planet associated with this card. Saturn and the earth have many common qualities, both may be seen in the sephiroth Malkuth.

Interpretation

The World indicates completion. The final achievement of all one's objectives. The attainment of harmony. A sense of satisfaction and fulfilment. Moving on. This card marks the end of an era.

THE MINOR ARCANA

The Minor Arcana consists of four suits of 14 cards, giving a total of 56 cards in all. It deals with everyday events and human potential. This is the realm of personal experience, that of the personal unconsciousness. The interpretations of the Minor cards are abstractions, not physical actions or states.

THE FOUR SUITS

Each of the four suits, Wands, Cups, Swords and Disks, corresponds to one of the four elements and to a particular sphere of human activity. A suit is considered either male or female in its nature.

Suit	Element	Governs	Temperament	Gender
Wands	Fire	Health	Choleric	Male
Cups	Water	Emotions	Phlegmatic	Female
Swords	Air	Mind	Sanguine	Male
Disks	Earth	Money	Melancholic	Female

As may be seen the elements each have their own distinct qualities, personalities or areas of influence, which are reflected in the corresponding suits.

Wands – Fire

Fire is regarded as the highest and most spiritual of the elements. In temperament it is intuition and inspiration, optimistic and positive. In action it is visionary, enthusiastic, forceful and aggressive. When badly aspected it may easily become

extravagant and proud, lacking sympathy and having no concern for the wellbeing of others. Wands represent the power of the Primal Fire, the life-giving warmth of creation. When associated with Cups, Wands become reduced and less powerful. They are strengthened in association with Swords. In its highest form they are the artist and the mystic, those gifted with creative power; their enemy is boredom and routine existence.

Cups – Water

This element is concerned with the emotions, romance and relationships. It is reflective, sensitive and fluid in thought. Water governs the psychic senses. Tending towards being withdrawn, when well aspected there is an ability to be methodical and progressive. Conversely, when poorly aspected, it becomes confused and lacking in direction. There is over-sensitivity leading to fear and an inability to cope with the rigours of life. Cups signify the primal sea from which life originated.

Swords – Air

The element of air relates to the mind, thinking and communication – language both written and spoken. This is the domain of the intellect, reason and clarity of thought, giving rise to inquisitiveness and idealism. There is a love of the precision of mathematics, logic rules the imagination. The negative aspect of this element leads to daydreams, dogmatism, emotional isolation and instability. Swords represent the life-giving air, upon which all life depends.

Disks – Earth

Earth is the source of all life, female and passive. Earth relates to materialism, physical pleasures and comforts. There is a suggestion of common sense, conservatism combined with reliability and practicality. It is commitment and the ability to work steadily towards a goal. Earth is the element of finance, stability and security. In excess this element may promote inaction, unadventurousness and stagnation. Earth is the bountiful provider, the foundation that sustains life. Disks

materialise the thoughts of Cups and gives structure to the other cards.

THE NUMBER CARDS

The Four Aces

The Aces in each suit represent the element in its purest form. This purity is reduced in each subsequent card, until reaching the card numbered Ten, where it is at its most base and worldly form.

The Cards from One to Ten

The Minor cards numbered Two to Ten correspond to the signs of the zodiac. Traditionally each of the 12 signs is attributed to one of the four elements and so to the equivalent suit.

In addition, astrologers divide each sign into three equal parts called decans or decanates. This allows each of the 36 cards to represent a single decan. Each decan is ruled by a planet. For example, the first decan of Aries is ruled by Mars (the rulers of the cards are listed in the Appendix).

	Two, Three and Four	Five, Six and Seven	Eight, Nine and Ten
<i>Wands – Fire</i>	Aries	Leo	Sagittarius
<i>Cups – Water</i>	Cancer	Scorpio	Pisces
<i>Swords – Air</i>	Gemini	Libra	Aquarius
<i>Disks – Earth</i>	Taurus	Virgo	Capricorn

Titles

The title given in the text for each of the Minor cards is derived from its position on the cabbalistic Tree of Life. The combination of sign, planet and title provides the key to the interpretation of the lesser cards. Although not essential, if memorised they provide a shorthand to the fuller meaning.

THE COURT CARDS

The cards known as the Court cards are those of King, Queen, Prince and Princess. They deal with the personal characteristics of the questioner. Outlining the subject's temperament, they

indicate reaction or behaviour in given circumstances. Additionally the Court cards may point to people influencing the questioner's situation or life.

The 16 Court cards are linked to the elements in two ways. Firstly by the association of the suit and secondly by rank. The King represents fire, Queen water, Prince air and Princess earth. When considered in their suits, the following pattern emerges:

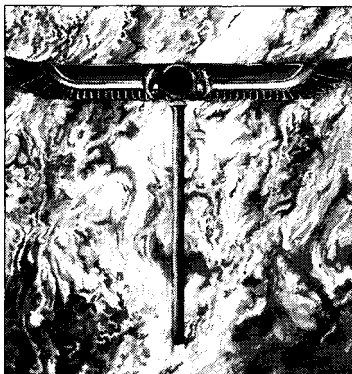
	Kings	Queens	Princes	Princesses
<i>Fire</i>	Fire of Fire	Fire of Water	Fire of Air	Fire of Earth
<i>Water</i>	Water of Fire	Water of Water	Water of Air	Water of Earth
<i>Air</i>	Air of Fire	Air of Water	Air of Air	Air of Earth
<i>Earth</i>	Earth of Fire	Earth of Water	Earth of Air	Earth of Earth

The 16 combinations of the elements describe 16 distinct personality types. From the table it may be seen that the King of Wands is regarded as fire of fire. This means that in this card the associations of that element are at their strongest and most powerful. It suggests a person who is very active and energetic. The Princess of Wands on the other hand combines the strength of fire with the practicality of earth.

The Significator

The Court cards may also be used as Significators. These are often used in spreads to represent the questioner. They act as a focus for the reader's subconscious. The reader chooses a Significator in one of two ways. If the questioner is well known to the reader then a card will be chosen that most reflects the questioner's personality. Otherwise use a card of the suit which corresponds to the questioner's birth sign.

Age also affects the choice of the Significator. The Kings and the Princes represent mature adult and young males respectively. Similarly the Queens and the Princesses represent females.



Title
Root of the Powers of Fire

THE ACE OF WANDS

The card shows a golden wand surmounted by wings amidst a raging sea of flame. The wings are divided into three areas, orange-red, blue-white and green. In the centre is a fiery disk in a gold ring. Emerging from either side of this ring are two serpents; these are in the form of the protective Uraeus, the sacred emblem of the Ancient Egyptian solar deities.

Interpretation

Natural force, energy and vigour. Male and phallic. Good health. The power necessary to achieve one's aims. Creativity and originality are the traits of this card. It signifies the conception of ideas and actions and has the potential to see them through. The beginning of a new enterprise or a fresh start. Births. A time of joy. Money, fortune and inheritance are well aspected.

Astrological sign

Aries

Planet

Mars

Title

Dominion

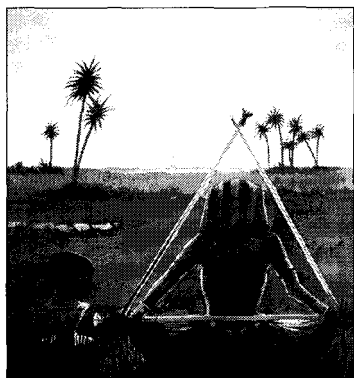


THE TWO OF WANDS

The ruler attends a celebration in the temple of Amun. The musicians play and dancers perform their dance, but he has turned his back on their entertainments. He has no interests in these things. Amidst all the splendour of his domain, he thirsts for new experiences, new challenges to occupy his time and his abundant energy.

Interpretation

Riches, fortune and magnificence, but also perhaps with problems that responsibility brings. A project is completed with a high degree of success, but it leaves one feeling unfulfilled. Further progress is necessary for true happiness. Aggressive but public-spirited and pioneering. Influence over others. Drive and ambition to achieve. A lack of subtlety and consideration on the finer points of tact. A tendency to be overbearing. Limited patience leads towards impulsiveness, which is combined with a temper that is difficult to control. Dissatisfaction with the present, but looking ahead to better times.



Astrological sign

Aries

Planet

Sun

Title

Virtue

THE THREE OF WANDS

A man has meditated through the hours of darkness. As dawn breaks and the sun rises into the morning sky it is time to move on. Refreshed, he is prepared for the work of the day. It is the card of spring which follows winter.

Interpretation

This card represents the establishment of strength. The preparation is complete, the action is about to begin. A change of state, from either planning to action or from inaction to action. Exertion after rest. Building upon one's past experiences. The birth of enterprise following the conception of the idea. The signs of coming success, an optimistic future. Partnerships are well aspected. The card indicates pride and perhaps a degree of extravagance or excess.

Astrological sign

Aries

Planet

Venus

Title

Completion



THE FOUR OF WANDS

A man and a woman rest upon a richly decorated chest. Above them is a canopy supported by four posts. These posts are decorated with alternating bands of gold and silver, headed with lotus flowers coloured deep violet. The couple are looking at the newly completed building.

Interpretation

Order, law and government. Tact and gentleness are necessary to the success of one's work. Order, stability and harmony, perhaps in a domestic context. Completion of work following a period of lengthy labour. Conclusions. Establishing one's roots in a new place. A place of calmness and stability. The card combines the fiery forces of Aries (ruled by Mars) with the femininity of Venus, so passion and creativity may also be evident.



Astrological sign

Leo

Planet

Saturn

Title

Strife

THE FIVE OF WANDS

Here there are five marching warriors, each armed with a spear. Behind them is a wall carved with images of the pharaoh's troops, commemorating the battles of the past.

Interpretation

The strength and energy that could be constructive is put to use in a negative way. A potential for creativity is overruled by the desire for destruction. The once amicable heart is embittered. The energy of this card is unbounded. Although present artistic ability is suppressed or has difficulty finding expression. There are conflicts here, but there is also the power to overcome them. A lengthy fight to obtain the prize. Competitive activities. The resources available are much more extensive than was originally realised; by drawing upon them, difficulties will be overcome. The themes of this card are linked in some ways with the goddess Sekhmet in the ninth card of the Major Arcana (Strength) – there is power here but it is only of use if it can be harnessed.

Astrological sign

Leo

Planet

Jupiter

Title

Victory



THE SIX OF WANDS

Before the fortress walls the warriors are presenting their lotus standards in a salute to honour the pharaoh's victory. Their leader has come to the front, the shaft of his standard bears the emblem of a lion. Both the lion and the lotus flower are symbols of solar energy.

Interpretation

Here the energy of the previous card has now achieved a balance. It is victorious, having triumphed over the opposition. Good news or gifts are suggested. Wishes will be fulfilled. Where the previous card used force to achieve its desires, here diplomacy will prove to be more effective. A card of optimism and confidence, there is however a danger that this may give way to arrogance. The combination of Leo and Jupiter gives this card a high degree of humanism. Artistic creativeness and self-expression are well aspected, inspiration is in full flow.



Astrological sign

Leo

Planet

Mars

Title

Valour

THE SEVEN OF WANDS

The amber-dressed woman is struggling desperately with the man. He is stronger than her, and she is in grave danger of being thrown from the edge of the cliff onto the sharpened stakes. Her future looks uncertain, but the approaching lioness may provide sufficient distraction for her to make her escape.

Interpretation

Conflicts of all kinds are indicated by this card. The brutal energy of Mars is brought to the power of Leo. Courage in extreme adversity. Perseverance against all odds. An ambitious and egotistical nature, pride is a major pitfall. Faith and confidence in one's convictions, which will be defended untiringly. This may be a card of the extremist and the fanatic. When poorly aspected the card can indicate stubbornness, and a reluctance to admit defeat. Negotiations and competition in business.

Astrological sign
Sagittarius

Planet
Mercury

Title
Swiftmess



THE EIGHT OF WANDS

The archer releases an arrow from his bow. Before him seven other arrows are prepared for use. The wall behind him is decorated with a painting of scribes keeping a tally as the workers harvest a crop of papyrus, which suggests the influence of the planet Mercury.

Interpretation

This card indicates speed of movement, things done quickly. A sudden and satisfactory end to a project. A time of change or travel which leads to a favourable outcome. Journeys overseas. The receipt of a letter or a message from afar. Communication at a distance. Also a tireless search for knowledge and learning from experience. Wide interests and a quest for understanding, possibly in the areas of mysticism, psychology or religion. A distaste of superficiality, which may lead to the intolerance of others. When poorly aspected, haste now may lead to problems at a later date. The importance of a full preparation should not be overlooked.



Astrological sign
Sagittarius

Planet
Moon

Title
Strength

THE NINE OF WANDS

The workmen use wooden levers to help them tilt the heavy statue; they are carefully manoeuvring the image of a goddess into its allotted position. In the background is a pyramid and a sphinx.

Interpretation

The Nine of Wands indicates a change in stability, and the strength required to successfully achieve and secure that change. Once established, overthrow is impossible, opposition will always be defeated. A secure and safe position from which to make further advance. There are hidden resources upon which to draw. Preparation of defences against a future attack. The lunar influence on this card indicates that the imagination also plays an important role, providing an insight into the ways of the opposition. The imagination should not however be allowed to dwell unnecessarily on illusory enemies. Awareness of the dangers of the world could lead to over-protection of dependants.

Astrological sign
Sagittarius

Planet
Saturn

Title
Oppression



THE TEN OF WANDS

The priest is in his temple, he raises his hands to his head in despair. He fears that the heavens are falling about him. The flames of his torches are beginning to burn out of control. He has over-reached himself and now he is overwhelmed by difficulties.

Interpretation

This card indicates a state of overwhelming oppression. The taking on of more responsibilities than one is successfully able to cope with. There is overbearing pressure from above. Victimisation and persecution. Desire for release from the excessive burden of commitments. Resources are spread too extensively to be effective. This leads to a loss of control. There is an urgent need for delegation – if this is not fully addressed it will eventually lead to downfall. Whatever the cause may be, the card suggests a loss of control over one's life or surroundings.



Element

Earth of Fire

Titles

Princess of the Shining Flame

Rose of the Palace of Flame

THE PRINCESS OF WANDS

The Princess of Wands stands in a landscape shattered by violent volcanic forces rising from deep within the earth. Plates of rock are crushed and pushed over one another, revealing the molten lava beneath. With her stalks a tiger. At her side there is a stone altar carved with hieroglyphs and images of earth gods.

Interpretation

A person with great ambitions in the material world, she is resourceful and adaptable. Filled with enthusiasm, she is keen to serve those in authority. In this she is trustworthy and faithful. The princess is the bearer of news and at times gossip. When ill aspected she is often irrational in her aspirations and is quick to change her mind or the track of her thought. She has little patience and never forgets an injury or insult.

Element
Air of Fire

Title
Prince of the Chariot of Fire



THE PRINCE OF WANDS

The Prince of Wands stands in his chariot, which is being drawn through the flames. The fire is of burning staves. He holds in his hand a red Waas sceptre. On a rocky mound behind him there stands a lion.

Interpretation

The possessor of both swiftness and strength. He appears to be indecisive, but this is caused by his ability to appreciate both sides of every argument. (Indeed he often expresses opinions that he does not himself hold – it may be that he has very few deeply-held beliefs). He is therefore often slow to come to a decision. In an attempt to make his choices more quickly the Prince may give the impression of being impulsive and easily influenced. At heart he is noble and generous to those around him. He delights in the romantic aspects of history and tradition, he pursues these interests vigorously, perhaps at times to excess.



Element

Water of Fire

Title

Queen of the Thrones of Flame

THE QUEEN OF WANDS

The Queen of Wands sits upon her throne in the midst of a sea of flame. Her dress is red and in her hand she holds a green Waas sceptre. Her right hand rests gently on the head of a reclining leopard. Her headband supports a solar disk, her earrings are also solar disks. The legs of her throne are crowned with carved heads of lions, on each of the arms there is a winged Uraeus. The flames reflect in the waters of a pool at her feet.

Interpretation

The Queen is adaptable, kind, generous and warm-hearted to her friends. Her intelligence and attractiveness makes her popular, and her friendship is eagerly sought. She is caring and sympathetic to the problems of others, but she may be irritated by opposition. She has a calm, practical mind, and in business matters she is usually successful. In the area of business she is fully able to apply her feminine skills.

Element
Fire of Fire

Titles
Lord of the Flame and the
Lightning
King of the Spirits of Fire

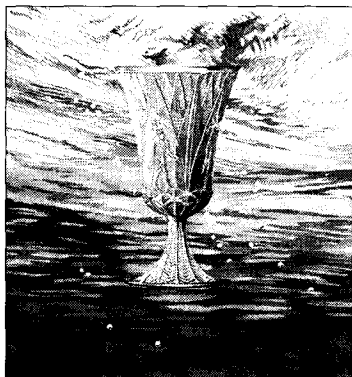


THE KING OF WANDS

Holding a red Waas sceptre, the King is mounted on a black horse. Together they leap over a wall of flames. His cloak is flaming red, and upon his breast is a winged solar disk and images of gods. The horse is draped in a cloth covering bordered in red and green. It is decorated with walking figures and the two eyes of the Horus. Behind, in the pale light of dawn there stands a dark stone obelisk carved with hieroglyphs.

Interpretation

The King of Wands is courageous, direct and unswerving in his actions. This makes him a formidable opponent in straightforward conflicts, but he does not have the capacity to adjust his approach in response to a change of circumstances. He takes his responsibilities seriously, and believes firmly in his right to be king. His solutions to problems may appear startling, imaginative and even revolutionary.



Title
The Root of the Powers of the
Waters

THE ACE OF CUPS

Beneath the moving waves of the Nile a chalice is suspended. With a rim and base trimmed in gold, the vessel is made of faience, a type of blue-green glass. The upper part of the chalice is in the form of a lotus flower. The petals are inscribed with the names of the gods Isis and Osiris. The figure is the Nile god, Hapi. He wears on his head a crown of papyrus plants. The decoration on the stem represents water.

Interpretation

This is a card of fertility and productivity. The cup is brimming with waters of life. Nourishment is provided in abundance. All needs are satisfied. It is beauty, pleasure and happiness. This card emphasises the emotions. Also indicated are romances and close friendships.

Astrological sign

Cancer

Planet

Venus

Title

Love

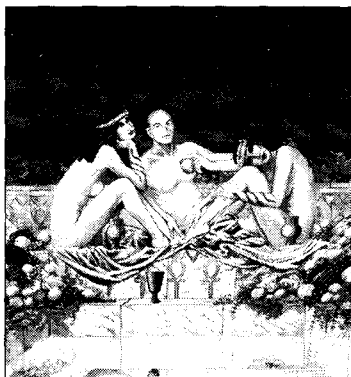


THE TWO OF CUPS

Two lovers meet and drink together from faience goblets. They sit on the edge of a pool. The pool is in the shape of the symbol of Venus and edged in copper, the metal associated with this sign. In the distance flows the river Nile.

Interpretation

This is a card of partnerships of all kinds, in either business or the personal areas. Love and emotional relationships are well aspected, possibly a marriage. There is a move towards permanence. It suggests co-operation, people or groups working together towards a common end. A harmonious meeting. Agreement, understanding and social union. A happy atmosphere either in the home or elsewhere. A reconciliation following a disagreement. Friendships in general.



Astrological sign

Cancer

Planet

Mercury

Title

Abundance

THE THREE OF CUPS

Three people sit relaxing by the side of an ornamental pool surrounded by a rich abundance of fruit. The man holds a pomegranate in his hand. The poolside is decorated with ankhs and triangles in blue. Against the starry sky stands the outline of a pyramid and an obelisk.

Interpretation

Happiness. Perhaps a marriage or a birth. This is a time of shared joy and celebrations. A reunion of family or friends. Feelings of deep satisfaction and fulfilment. This is a card of physical enjoyment and sensuality. This in excess could easily lead to intoxication. Another aspect, suggested by the association with the planet Mercury, is the power to communicate and express one's ideas freely. Also indicated is the receipt of important or good news.

Astrological sign

Cancer

Planet

Moon

Title

Luxury



THE FOUR OF CUPS

The full moon hangs low in the deep blue sky. Its pale light falls across the Nile onto a woman sitting alone on its rocky banks. She drinks from a red chalice, there are two others beside her, while a fourth lies on its side amongst the rocks. Nearby there is a crab, the emblem of the sign of Cancer. The moon is the ruling planet of Cancer.

Interpretation

This card suggests that although success has been achieved, it has not brought with it any of the feelings of satisfaction that one might have expected. It is boredom in the presence of luxury. A feeling of apathy and the abandonment of desire. There are signs of a dissatisfaction with one's circumstances or surroundings. A deep-felt need for change of some kind combined with the availability of the power to make this change. Wishing that the future will bring relief from boredom.



Astrological sign
Scorpio

Planet
Mars

Title
Disappointment

THE FIVE OF CUPS

The central figure of this card sits dejected on the ground, ringed by five upturned cups. A couple walk away from him towards the river. A concerned child watches them leave. Across the river a path climbs through the bank and disappears behind the trees.

Interpretation

Despite losses, be thankful for that which remains. This card warns against the folly of worrying about things which cannot be changed, and suggests that in difficult times one should look to the future. Following a setback, however severe, it is advisable to spend time constructively and not wallow in self-pity. A time of reassessment and restructuring. A feeling of disappointment could be turned to a time of positive action, if one could make the effort.

Astrological sign
Scorpio

Planet
Sun

Title
Pleasure



THE SIX OF CUPS

In a glade in the wooded area of the Nile Delta, a shrine to the goddess Bast has been raised. The light of the sun falls, filtered by foliage around the statue of the goddess. A couple find pleasure in observing the sacred cats as they play around the six golden cups.

Interpretation

This is a card of wellbeing. The peace and harmony of nature undefiled. The pleasure of simple things. Looking back on the past with fond memories. Happy recollections of childhood. A pleasant reunion with a friend or associate from the past. Returning to one's roots, perhaps a time of quiet reflection. The realisation of how the present situation is founded upon the events experienced in the past.



Astrological sign

Scorpio

Planet

Venus

Title

Debauchery

THE SEVEN OF CUPS

Assisted by her servants the richly attired noblewoman applies cosmetics to her face. As one servant holds a highly polished mirror, the second bears a tray of small pots of pigments and perfumes. The walls are decorated with paintings of riverside scenes.

Interpretation

Here there is a likelihood of being confronted with a bewildering choice, there are many possibilities available. Friends and family will be available to give advice, helpful or otherwise. Look deeply into the matter in hand and strive to clear away the confusion. The Seven of Cups carries with it a suggestion of illusion and concealment. There may be an element of self-deception. A deep-seated unwillingness to face up to the facts. Someone living in the past who cannot accept the reality of the present. Nothing is to be trusted at face value.

Astrological sign

Pisces

Planet

Saturn

Title

Indolence

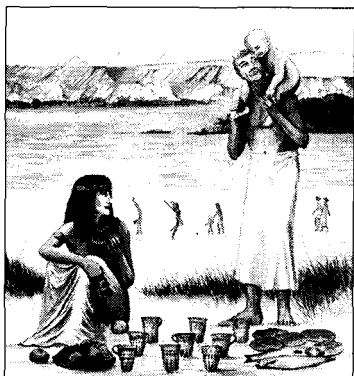


THE EIGHT OF CUPS

A sandy beach is littered with overturned cups and chalices. They have the appearance of being abandoned, as have the fish, gasping for breath. On the horizon a ship is silhouetted against the light of the setting sun.

Interpretation

Laziness has led to a feeling of stagnation. There is a desire to escape the dullness of the present situation, but this is accompanied by an inability to act. Boredom with circumstances, a lack of stimulus. A longing for change is suffocated by feelings of apathy. Paralysis in the face of need for positive action. An atmosphere of lethargy and lifelessness. Languidity. Idleness and daydreaming.



Astrological sign

Pisces

Planet

Jupiter

Title

Happiness

THE NINE OF CUPS

Here a family enjoy their time away from home and work on the sandy bank of the Nile. Food and drink is set out before them – apples, grapes, figs and wine. The fish allude to the sign of Pisces. In the distance three pyramids are outlined against the sky.

Interpretation

This is a card of happiness and contentment in the area of the family, perhaps a joyful gathering. Worries are now in the past, looking forward to a bright future. General optimism and peace of mind. The generosity and hospitality of friends. A time for helping others. In this card there is an appreciation of the simple pleasures of life. Security. A sense of satisfaction with one's achievements in life. Time for a well-earned rest following a period of toil.

Astrological sign

Pisces

Planet

Mars

Title

Satiety



THE TEN OF CUPS

A group of friends richly dressed have gathered for a celebration. They enjoy themselves amongst their valued possessions. Musicians play and sing for the entertainment of the party. Food and wine are supplied in plenty. The wall behind is painted with a scene of a transport ship loaded with jars of wine. Below there are figures engaged in the process of making beer.

Interpretation

This card celebrates the joy of life but only on the physical or emotional planes. There is little sign of spiritual aspirations. A complete contentment and satisfaction with one's place in the world. Continuing success. There are no regrets over the past and no concerns for the future. This is the card of living for today. Living life to the fullest. Good fortune in love and relationships. An idyllic lifestyle.



Element
Earth of Water

Title
Princess of the Waters

THE PRINCESS OF CUPS

Beneath the heavy rock of a vast cavern the Princess walks along the edge of the waters. She holds a chalice in one hand while in her other hand she holds a white lotus flower. A dolphin, which has entered the cavern from the sea beyond, leaps with joy at the sight of the Princess. Amongst the pebbles at her feet lie shells. A white swan is before her.

Interpretation

The Princess is highly imaginative and artistic. She spends a great deal of time in reflection and contemplation, and may even be considered to be something of a daydreamer, but she is able to translate her ideas into material form. She combines her imagination with a strong sense of practicality. This card indicates someone romantic at heart, but who is too realistic to be held back by nostalgic idealism. A born visionary.

Element
Air of Water

Title
Prince of the Chariot of Water



THE PRINCE OF CUPS

The Prince of Cups drives his chariot through the shallow waters at the edge of the sea. His attire and the embroidered coverings of his horses are red and blue. His armour is made of silver and hardened leather. In his hands he holds a red lotus and a chalice from which a cobra raises its head. Behind the eagle on the horizon there are two ships.

Interpretation

The Prince presents a calm and impenetrable exterior to the world. Beneath however he is consumed with the most intense passions. He appears to be understanding and ready to accept the ideas of others, but secretly he works to distort them to further his own ambitions. His self-interest leads to an apparent lack of conscience, and eventually the distrust of others. He is ruthless and feels no responsibility for others.



Element
Water of Water

Title
Queen of the Thrones of Water

THE QUEEN OF CUPS

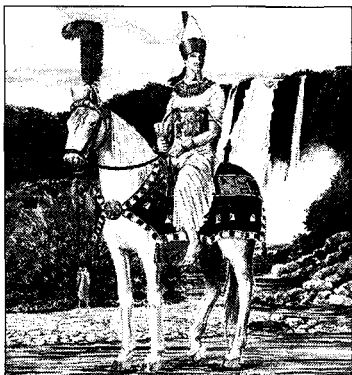
On a water-washed rock sits the Queen of Cups, dipping her feet beneath the surface. Behind her the waves crash and tumble, revealing the splendour of their elemental force. The waters around the Queen, however, are calm and placid. From the sea a crayfish emerges and climbs upon the rock. She holds a lotus flower in her hand which she rests on the back of an ibis. On her lap she cradles a chalice.

Interpretation

The Queen has the full intuitive qualities of the element of water. She has complete confidence in her instincts. The emotions of others – be they of happiness or deepest sadness – wash over her without effect. She has well-developed artistic abilities and a creative imagination. She is attractive and well-liked by others.

Element
Fire of Water

Titles
Lord of the Waves and the
Waters
King of the Hosts of the Sea

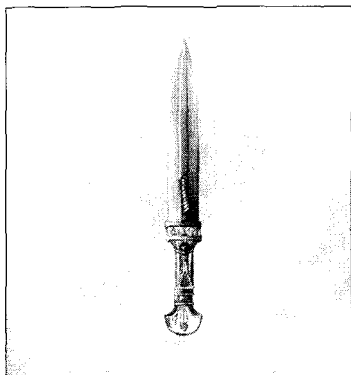


THE KING OF CUPS

In the shallow waters of a river the King of Cups sits erect upon his white horse. His waistband bears the image of a nobleman presenting an offering of waterside plants to the hippopotamus god of the Nile. The horse blanket is red and blue, and is decorated with figures holding chalices. A waterfall rages behind him. On the pebbled edge of the river a peacock displays his plumage.

Interpretation

This card indicates an easy-going person. His enthusiasm is quickly fired, but it is equally quickly subdued. The span of his interest is limited. Lacking in endurance, he thirsts for a constant stream of stimulus. He is open-minded to the thoughts of others, and enjoys novel ideas. He is eager for new experiences, but longs to move on to other things. He does not thrive in a mundane environment.



Title
The Root of the Powers of Air

THE ACE OF SWORDS

The Ace of Swords is suspended, point uppermost, amongst the clouds of the sky. On the golden handle the god Shu is depicted. Shu is the god of the element air. In his hands the shape of the hieroglyphic symbol representing the word 'sky' is embossed. His emblem the feather may be seen on the blade of the sword. The pommel is decorated with the image of the Deshret crown of Lower Egypt.

Interpretation

Triumph, victory and success. Justice and authority. Strength in adversity. The powers of the intellect will succeed, against all opposition. The start of a process which will prove unstoppable. Change born of necessity. Freedom from constraint.

Astrological sign

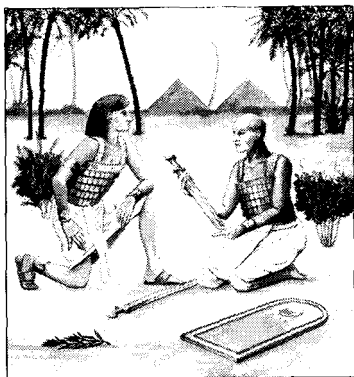
Libra

Planet

Moon

Title

Peace

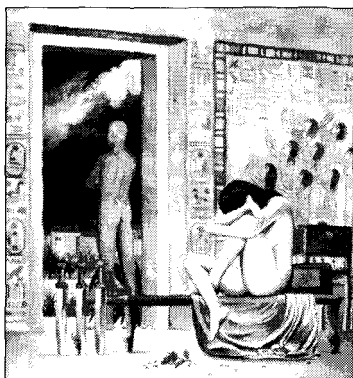


THE TWO OF SWORDS

Two warriors meet in the dull grey light of dawn. Once enemies, they have come together in peace or possibly an attempt of friendship. As a gesture of this new understanding they symbolically present each other with gifts of swords. On the ground is a shield and a sprig of laurel – the shield will not be required as long as the peace remains.

Interpretation

This is a card of balanced tensions; the equilibrium, however, may be illusory and transient. It is a peace between warriors, complete with mistrust and suspicion. Aggression lies just beneath the surface, to be released at any moment. An unguarded word or a misunderstanding is all that is required to tip the balance towards strife. The peace, now won, must be worked for to be maintained. There is hope for the future.



Astrological sign

Libra

Planet

Saturn

Title

Sorrow

THE THREE OF SWORDS

On the bed a woman covers her head in sorrow, at the foot of the bed three swords have been driven into the ground. The woman's partner is at the doorway looking out into the night. In the foreground a flower lays with its petals scattered across the floor. The wall painting is of a group of wailing women.

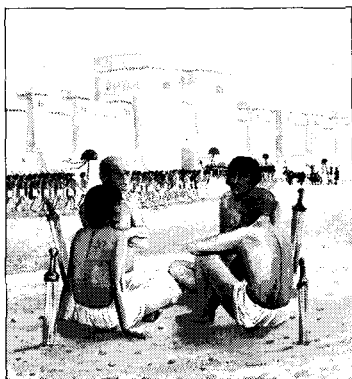
Interpretation

This card represents sorrow and heartbreak. The conflict is however necessary for future happiness leading to other and better things. Clearing the ground for future developments. There are joyous times to come. The end of an unsatisfactory relationship, things coming to a head. The calm before the storm. Although not realised at the time, this is a beginning of a recovery, either physical or emotional. Disappointment that will soon become celebration.

Astrological sign
Libra

Planet
Jupiter

Title
Truce



THE FOUR OF SWORDS

Four soldiers sit on the sand and talk of the past, their battles are over for the present. However they have to work to keep the truce from breaking down. Each man has his sword stuck into the ground behind him ready for whenever it may be required. Behind them an army is marching through the gates of a walled city.

Interpretation

A time of truce has come, but it is an imposed truce. It may not be wanted by the opposing factions, they may have had peace pressed upon them. The card also points towards appeasement and those who would be happy with an easy settlement of a dispute, rather than the more difficult route of standing up for truth and justice. The idea of appeasement may also apply to the intellect, when unpleasant or difficult truths are not faced but ignored.



Astrological sign
Aquarius

Planet
Venus

Title
Defeat

THE FIVE OF SWORDS

Here the woman, traditionally considered to be the weaker of the sexes, has a firm control over the situation. The swords, representing both the man's ambitions and his strength, lie broken on the floor. He leans against the wall for support as he gazes out of the window. The woman with an air of casualness holds the fifth sword, the single sword to remain intact.

Interpretation

A humiliating defeat which must be accepted before future progress may be made. Pride must be swallowed in order to get on with life. A weak person overpowered or overruled by someone stronger. Domination and intimidation by another. Hopes or plans are dashed in a way that leaves in its wake feelings of inadequacy and humiliation. The intellect misguided by the emotions. A period of enforced inactivity, possibly a time for recuperation.

Astrological sign
Aquarius

Planet
Mercury

Title
Science



THE SIX OF SWORDS

Here a young woman kneels upon a small reed boat which drifts out to the middle of the river. She turns her head and looks over her shoulder, back to the shore. In the water there are six swords; it is these that have driven her to set out on this unknown journey.

Interpretation

This card suggests a journey, probably by water. This may be necessary to avoid problems, leaving one's troubles behind, even an escape from a position of imminent danger. The release from restrictions. Overseas trade or other business matters flow smoothly. Holidays or news from abroad. Advantages are to be gained by travel. The card may also indicate someone who chooses to run away from problems, rather than deal with them. An outgoing intellect, thirsting for new discoveries. Searching for solutions.



Astrological sign
Aquarius

Planet
Moon

Title
Futility

THE SEVEN OF SWORDS

Seven men lie in wait outside a doorway, their swords ready in their hands. The light from inside the building is strong and warm, but they stand in the cold light of the moon. Around the doorway carved hieroglyphs catch the pale light.

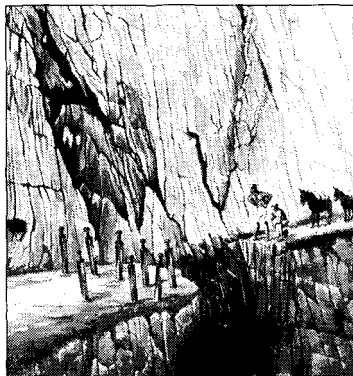
Interpretation

There are problems looming but this card warns against confronting them head on. A direct response would be disastrous. In this situation it is advisable to use forethought and possibly a degree of cunning to escape. An unconventional solution to a problem will bring success and victory. Vigilance and constant awareness are necessary to avoid stumbling into a trap. A reappraisal of one's future plans may be required. This is not a card for hasty actions or decisions, plenty of time should be taken to make plans, perhaps even consider a postponement.

Astrological sign
Gemini

Planet
Jupiter

Title
Interference



THE EIGHT OF SWORDS

Here the travellers have come across an impassable obstacle. A landslide has carried away a section of the cliff-face path and their progress is halted. Across the gap eight swords have been driven into the ground.

Interpretation

Desires repeatedly obstructed by accidental interference. A difficult and apparently inescapable position. A dead end with no clear way ahead. The problem faced here, although apparently insurmountable, does have a solution, which once found will throw a new light on the situation. The card suggests that self-imprisonment, once realised for what it is, may be readily escaped. There is an option available which may not be immediately obvious. This leads to the idea that one should recognise the extent of one's ignorance.



Astrological sign

Gemini

Planet

Mars

Title

Cruelty

THE NINE OF SWORDS

This card shows a man alone in a cave. He has been led there by others and then left. After searching for the way out he is now resigned to the hopelessness of his fate. Time passes and hunger and starvation begin to affect his mind. In the darkness he sees lights glimmering before him. They grow brighter and nine swords appear hanging above his head.

Interpretation

Suffering at the hands of others, the nine of swords indicates the individual humiliated or suppressed by the masses. Intolerance, mindlessness. The imprisonment of the innocent. Torture of both the body and the mind. On the part of the subject there is an awareness that leads to desolation and resignation. Ultimately feelings of apathy and ambivalence towards the cruelty and inhumanity of man. Despair and disillusion.

Astrological sign
Gemini

Planet
Sun

Title
Ruin



THE TEN OF SWORDS

Tomb robbers frantically search the burial chamber for gold and precious jewels. The carefully-prepared funerary objects have been irreverently cast about. To the Egyptians the violation of the tomb and particularly the mummy of the dead was the ultimate desecration.

Interpretation

This card represents absolute and sudden ruin, the final calamity. Complete and total loss coming without warning. It alludes to the transience of all things worldly. This is however the final disaster, after which there will be a marked upturn in one's fortunes, as things cannot get any worse.



Element
Earth of Air

Titles
Princess of the Rushing Winds
Lotus of the Palace of Air

THE PRINCESS OF SWORDS

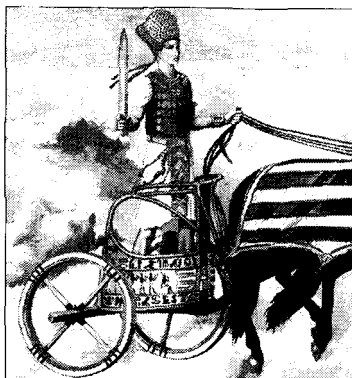
The Princess is elevated upon a wind-swept rocky pinnacle, and she inverts her sword and points it towards the earth. Beside her is an altar from which offerings of incense rise to the gods. Leaning against the altar is a mask of the god Bes. Behind her the clouds gather in warning of the storm to come.

Interpretation

The Princess of Swords possesses a keen intellect, she is studious, reserved and possibly withdrawn. She is capable of profiting materially from her ideas. Also suggested is the influence of the powers above, from superiors or elders. Legal or professional consultations may be required. An eloquent and knowledgeable debater, she is skilled and subtle in the use of language. Gifted in the field of diplomacy, she is able to manipulate negotiations to her advantage. She makes an ideal emissary or ambassador.

Element
Air of Air

Title
Prince of the Chariots of the
Winds



THE PRINCE OF SWORDS

The Prince, sword in hand, drives his chariot through the clouds. The chariot is decorated with hieroglyphs relating to the sky. In the central panel there is a gold and purple ankh.

Interpretation

The Prince of Swords is the most intellectual of the Court cards. His mind is his strongest weapon. However he lacks the ability to make practical use of his skills. Thought without action. All things are rationalised into unreality, they become merely conceptual reflections of the actuality. His mind is always full of ideas. He is completely intoxicated by the joy of creative thought, overriding any desire to act. Once fully worked through, the idea has no further use or interest to him. To others he seems out of place in the real world, and may be unable to cope with the practicalities of life. He is an academic and only fully happy amongst fellow academics.



Element

Water of Air

Title

Queen of the Thrones of Air

THE QUEEN OF SWORDS

Her throne is the clouds; the Queen holds a sword and a carving of a child's head. The way she holds these items suggests the balancing of one against the other, this card has links with the sign of Libra. She wears the golden-winged headdress of the vulture goddess Nekhebet. Two Egyptian geese fly behind her.

Interpretation

The Queen is a keen observer of the ways of humanity, she is highly perceptive and able to interpret the subtleties of meaning and intent. Her impressions of others are accurate and detailed. While she always seeks to further her own desires, she is capable of resolving the disagreements and differences of others. Her charm and graciousness make her a popular person. She is independent and self-reliant, and she has the confidence to follow her own instincts and beliefs.

Element
Fire of Air

Titles
Lord of the Winds and Breezes
King of the Spirits of Air



THE KING OF SWORDS

The King of Swords rides before the winds of the storm. As his horse gallops through the air, he extends his sword arm, as if in attack. Swallows soar in the air around him. He is above the clouds, in complete control of his element.

Interpretation

The King is driven by inspiration and is not held back by reflection. When an idea grips him he pursues it with all his energy, and is unswerving in his determination to see it through. He is predominantly active, and prefers a strategy of attack rather than one of defence. He is the person who acts first and asks questions later. The King represents worldly authority. His mind is quick, his intellect sharp. He has no time for the muddle-headed woolly thinking of others.



Title
The Root of the Powers of
Earth

THE ACE OF DISKS

The Disk, cut from black granite, is suspended against a rocky background. Its centre is a green ankh with figures of the gods Isis and Osiris at either side. Beneath the ankh is the hieroglyph representing earth.

Interpretation

This is a card of materialism. Earthly power and wealth. Monetary wellbeing and prosperity. There is strong financial independence and security. The basic pleasures are indicated along with comfort and contentment. There is an abundance of the good things in life. The Ace of Disks suggests a slow-moving but irrepressible force, one which will eventually overcome all obstacles. It is steadfast and enduring in times of adversity. Firm foundations upon which to build for the future.

Astrological sign
Capricorn

Planet
Jupiter

Title
Change



THE TWO OF DISKS

Against the red sunlit stone a young woman dances, learning the arts of movement and music. Beneath the shadows of the colossal statues her tutor sits beating a tambourine. She is passing on the skills which she has developed over many years.

Interpretation

This is a card of change and flow. It is the change that brings stability, as a gyroscope which holds its position only when spinning. The change is harmonious and may extend from generation to generation. It is continuity through time. A chain of ideas or wealth passing down through the ages. Also indicated is the idea of juggling, keeping many projects up in the air at the same time, perhaps to the extent that resources are stretched too thinly.



Astrological sign

Capricorn

Planet

Mars

Title

Work

THE THREE OF DISKS

The two architects stand on a plateau overlooking the work going on below. On the ground they have inscribed three rings, onto which the outline of the pyramid has been superimposed. Below them workmen are cutting stone blocks, others drag the blocks over the edge towards their destination. In the distance the pyramid is progressing gradually towards completion.

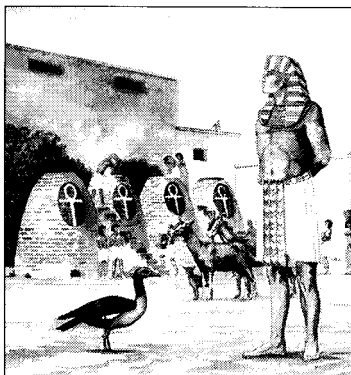
Interpretation

The card suggests the craft of the mason. It is construction on the material plane, the mastery of practical skills. Creating something for the future. Commercial enterprises are well-aspected and will prove to be profitable. However, helping one's fellows will bring satisfaction over and above financial reward. Abilities are recognised and honoured by others. Hard work. A rewarding experience. The bringing together of people of various fields of expertise for a particular project.

Astrological sign
Capricorn

Planet
Sun

Title
Power

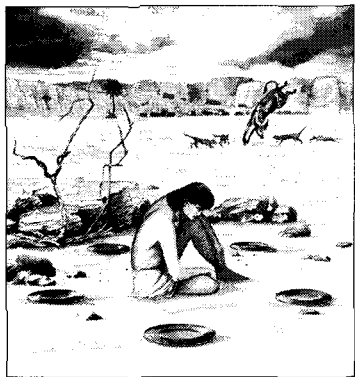


THE FOUR OF DISKS

The nobleman stands in the courtyard of his great house. Here grain is collected from the surrounding lands. It is stored in readiness for use in times of scarcity and famine, when it is given out to the people in need. The grain silos are marked with ankh symbols symbolising life.

Interpretation

The power of this card is used in a benign and positive way. It is the power of the responsible ruler or the caring father. Strength is realised by planning for the future. Planning confers stability and the reassurance of security in one's future life. Financial problems are overcome before they arise. Pensions, insurance and investments are suggested, also money gained from gifts or legacies. Building for the future. There is however an element of isolation associated with this card.



Astrological sign

Taurus

Planet

Mercury

Title

Worry

THE FIVE OF DISKS

A barren desert, life is scarce. In the distance wild dogs worry the tethered cow. Storm clouds gather above, blanking out the blue of the sky. In the foreground the man sits head bowed, too preoccupied to notice what is happening. Around him are five clay dishes.

Interpretation

Anxieties about money, possibly due to a loss of income or status. There is a threat of insecurity. Financial troubles are not however insurmountable but they do require care and thought to resolve. One should be aware of missing opportunities as they arise or overlooking chances that may be available. There is an intimation of labour and toil, either at the present or to come. One's resources may be over-extended. Survival is possible despite a time of hardship. The troubles here are on the material plane.

Astrological sign

Taurus

Planet

Moon

Title

Success



THE SIX OF DISKS

The dancer performs before six statues of the moon goddess. Her dance is an offering to the deity. Around her feet there is a variety of other offerings including fruits, models and amulets. In the background is a truncated pyramid.

Interpretation

This card foretells of coming of wealth. A gift may be on the way perhaps from an unsuspected source. Success will place one in the position of helping others. This is the card of the philanthropist. Generosity. Liberal ideas and the patronage of the arts. Giving back part of what fate hands out. Work or business running smoothly and profitably. An increase in income. Successful investments yield a good return. The present is a financially or spiritually rewarding period in one's life.



Astrological sign

Taurus

Planet

Saturn

Title

Failure

THE SEVEN OF DISKS

A woman looks over a field. It should have produced a rich crop of wheat, but the waters were insufficient. The earth is parched, its surface cracked, the plants have wilted and died. The woman holds two dishes in her hands, five others lay on the ground.

Interpretation

This is a warning of imminent loss or disappointment. Plans and efforts made in the past come to nothing. There is a suggestion of a project or action which started well but was not carried through to its natural conclusion. Over-caution may be a major restricting factor.

Astrological sign
Virgo

Planet
Sun

Title
Prudence



THE EIGHT OF DISKS

The woman is a weaver of reed mats. She has taken the product of her work to a place near the temple wall. Here she displays the mats and offers them for sale to passers-by. In the background the great pylon of the temple may be seen.

Interpretation

Making profitable use of one's skills and expertise. The rewards of honest labour. Hard work now will bring benefits in the future. Commitment to a worthwhile project will be rewarded in the future. Working behind the scenes, with great success. A time of training (and perhaps low pay) when completed will result in a good and highly-salaried position. A promotion or new job may be in the offing. There is great promise for the future. Patience and perseverance will be rewarded.



Astrological sign

Virgo

Planet

Venus

Title

Gain

THE NINE OF DISKS

A young woman, who judging from her dress is of noble birth, walks in the hills above her home. Turning a corner she unexpectedly stumbles upon a cave. Looking into the entrance she sees a rich blue cloth, upon which there are nine golden dishes.

Interpretation

A card of good luck. Wishes for material success and prosperity are answered. It is a time of comfort and luxury. Goals or aims in life are achieved, giving control over life and circumstances. There is popularity and the favour of others. Accomplishment in the world of business or finance. A feeling of deep satisfaction. There may be an element of surprise in the receipt of wealth, gifts out of the blue. Perhaps a love of the countryside, outdoor activities are enjoyed.

Astrological sign
Virgo

Planet
Jupiter

Title
Wealth



THE TEN OF DISKS

The Ten of Disks shows a family gathering. The generations have come together dressed for a celebration. A foreign merchant stands before them, displaying a fine diaphanous cloth embroidered with golden disks. It is a costly item but well within their means.

Interpretation

The prosperity of this card is the wealth that has accumulated over the ages. It has grown and passed down through the generations to the present day. It is family wealth, built upon the endeavours of one's ancestors. Receiving an inheritance of great value, either financial or sentimental. Advice from elder members of the family. The family home and home life. A family gathering.



Element

Earth of Earth

Titles

Princess of the Echoing Hills

Rose of the Palace of Earth

THE PRINCESS OF DISKS

The Princess of Disks stands in a highly vegetated area, surrounded by lush green plants and trees. In the background there is a cliff-face. In her hand she holds a disk-tipped staff, whilst under her left arm she carries a large disk, inscribed with hieroglyphs representing the earth. Behind stands a wild ram.

Interpretation

A responsible down-to-earth person, she is good in business matters and would make a more than able administrator. A diligent worker, honourable and conscientious. The Princess has a practical mind. She is careful with money and a good manager of financial affairs.

Element
Air of Earth

Title
Prince of the Chariots of Earth



THE PRINCE OF DISKS

The Prince of Disks looks out from his chariot. The chariot is at rest, the horses stand waiting for action. The ribbons hanging from his belt blow in the breeze. He holds a brown staff topped with a gold disk and an ankh. His left hand supports a gold disk upon the rail of his chariot. The disk is inscribed with an image of the gods of earth and air. There is a bull on a mound nearby.

Interpretation

There is a great potential for energy in this card, which is strongest when applied to practical matters. He is competent and persevering in his work. Ingeniously inventive and adaptive in his attitude to the resources at his disposal. His actions may be slow, but they are steady and well thought out. His lack of emotion may make him appear insensitive. He sees no reason to try to understand concepts beyond his abilities.



Element
Water of Earth

Title
Queen of the Thrones of Earth

THE QUEEN OF DISKS

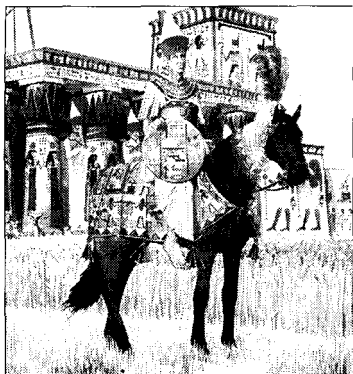
The Queen of Disks sits upon her gold and ebony throne. It is set upon a firm rock in the midst of rich vegetation. Her gold disk is decorated with an ankh. Her wand rests upon the arm of her throne. Around the shaft is a spiral of gold, its tip is a crystal. Upon the Queen's head is a gold band bearing the heads of horned beasts. Beneath the throne lies a sacred cat and at her side a male goat.

Interpretation

The ambitions of the Queen are of a practical nature. She is hard-working and domesticated. Her nature is kind and affectionate. She is generous and forgiving. She enjoys worldly pleasures, and loves the comforts and luxuries of life. She may be prone to weight problems, ill-use of alcohol or drugs. She depends more on her intuitive skills than her intellect.

Element
Fire of Earth

Titles
Lord of the Wide and Fertile
Land
King of the Spirits of the Earth



THE KING OF DISKS

The King of Disks sits upon his horse in a field of ripe wheat. Some of the wheat has been harvested, the remainder has still to be reaped. He holds a gold disk in his hand. The horse's covering bears images of men working in the fields, cutting the wheat and carrying it to the stores. Behind, deer wander past the pillars of the temple.

Interpretation

The King is practical, methodical and slow in his deliberations. He uses traditional approaches to solving problems and is patient and laborious. His reactions are instinctive rather than imaginative and he has little intellectual grasp of the world. He may have difficulty expressing himself. He is devoted to those he loves. Slow to anger, but unforgiving to those who commit injury.

SPREADS

For those new to the Tarot the task of learning how to use the cards to their full may appear more than a little daunting. There are several ways of making the learning process less demanding.

To familiarise yourself with the cards, you must handle them as much as possible. Spend time looking at the cards, hold them, line them up in groups, compare cards of the same value from different suits. Mix them up and sort them out again.

Below are a number of simple exercises designed to aid the beginner in learning the meanings of the cards. Try to set aside a period of time each day for practice.

1 Tarot Note Book

To assist in memorising the interpretations of the individual cards it may be helpful to keep a note book. With a page devoted to each card, make a note of your understanding of the interpretations. By committing your thoughts into writing, your mind is made to work at a deeper level than it would otherwise do if you simply tried to remember the meanings as you read the book. Refer to your notes when doing readings and as new thoughts occur record them on the relevant pages.

2 Memory Test A

Choose a card at random, prop it up at a comfortable distance in front of you and look at it carefully. Write down whatever comes into your head. When you can think of no more, compare your notes with the handbook and your own notes.

3 Memory Test B

This method is useful if you do not have your cards readily available – if you are away from home, travelling for example, and you have time on your hands. Simply think of a card title and try to visualise, down to the smallest detail, the illustration that appears on that card. Eventually you will find that you are able to recollect the images of the whole pack.

4 Recording Spreads

A spread of cards may well be a daunting sight to the beginner, but by working slowly progress will be made. Initially it will be useful to make notes through each reading.

Start by drawing a rough diagram of the spread. Indicate the cards by their titles in their relative positions. Rely on your memory and knowledge of the cards – initially it is your spontaneous reaction to the cards that matters. Make a note of their various meanings as they occur to you. If the precise interpretation of any card eludes you, look at the illustration and make a guess. At this stage all that matters is your general feel for the cards – accuracy will come in time.

Next consider the relationship between the cards, look at how they interact, how the meaning of each individual card is coloured and influenced by its neighbouring cards. (A note of this may be made between the relevant cards). Finally, take an overview of the entire spread, noting the predominance of any particular theme or influence.

When this process has been completed, and your thoughts are exhausted refer to the handbook and your own notes. Compare your impressions of the reading with the interpretations given. To begin with there will be many differences, but as time goes by your readings will improve. Your own notes will develop beyond the scope of this handbook and you will find that your interpretations will become individualised, corresponding to your own personality.

5 *Dreaming*

Many writers suggest taking a good look at a single card at night immediately before sleep. This allows the sleeping mind to work on the image, perhaps even raising significant and symbolic dreams from the subconscious, which will be remembered the following day. If this does occur, make a written record of the dream and your feelings about it for future reference. To begin with these notes may make little sense, but later meaning will emerge.

Do not be disheartened if your progress is initially slow. The key to a successful Tarot reading is the ability to combine knowledge with intuition. With constant practice you will find that your skills in both areas will develop and your confidence improve.

REVERSED CARDS

The necessity of reversed meanings is purely a matter of personal choice. Some readers prefer to use upright and reversed (upside down) cards in their readings and adapt their interpretations to match, but others prefer a more fluid method. No reversed interpretations of the cards are given in this book. Here the cards retain their individual meanings but, within the context of a spread, the precise interpretation of a card is influenced and coloured by those of its neighbouring cards. So when two cards with opposing interpretations lie side by side, a balancing occurs reducing the strength of each; with a pair of cards of similar meaning, their combined influence is magnified. This method encourages the reader to adopt a holistic approach to the spread rather than considering each card separately.

COMBINATIONS OF CARDS

In addition to the meanings of individual cards, a predominance of a particular type of card may indicate the overall theme of the spread, or provide other additional information. This predominance may be subdivided into primary and secondary majorities. For example, in a spread where the majority of the cards are from the suit of Wands, action is the main theme, but if

in addition there is a quantity of Cups, then the nature of the action would be modified by the emotions.

Cards of different suits influence one another on a one-to-one basis. Wands and Cups, for instance, have a negative effect on each other, as water has a negative effect on fire (and vice-versa).

	Wands	Cups	Swords	Disks
<i>Wands</i>	no effect	negative	positive	positive
<i>Cups</i>	negative	no effect	positive	no effect
<i>Swords</i>	positive	positive	no effect	negative
<i>Disks</i>	positive	no effect	negative	no effect

The occurrence in a reading of three or four of the following cards has a special significance above and in addition to that of the individual cards:

<i>Ace</i>	Changes are to come, great energy, wealth.
<i>Two</i>	Groups and gatherings, team work, co-operation.
<i>Three</i>	Creativity, construction, hard work, commitment.
<i>Four</i>	Completed work, security, rest and reflection.
<i>Five</i>	Instability, competition, facing opposition.
<i>Six</i>	Harmony, peace, pleasure and success, gain.
<i>Seven</i>	Disappointment, pitfalls and concealment.
<i>Eight</i>	Communication and travel, commerce and trade.
<i>Nine</i>	Responsibilities, accomplishment, correspondence.
<i>Ten</i>	Success, joyfulness, family matters, celebration.
<i>Princess</i>	Young people, new ideas, gatherings, socializing.
<i>Prince</i>	People of rank and importance, action, honours.
<i>Queen</i>	Groups of females, authority and influence.
<i>King</i>	Powerful friendships, groups of men, politics.

If half or more of the cards are of the same suit, then the following may apply:

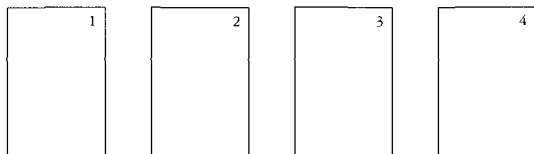
<i>Wands</i>	Action and change, a thirst for creativity.
<i>Cups</i>	The emotions, romance, relationships.
<i>Swords</i>	The intellect, messages, mental activity.
<i>Disks</i>	Worldly matters, money and wealth, solidity.

SELF READINGS

Reading the cards for yourself may not be as accurate as when you read them for others. There may be difficulty in achieving the required degree of detachment – impartiality is easier when dealing with other people, especially strangers. If you are elated or depressed your interpretations will reflect this – the same cards appearing at another time would be read differently. That is not to say do not attempt self readings, simply that you should not imagine that they can be unaffected by your thoughts.

THE FOUR CARD SPREAD

This first spread is simple and straightforward to use and is useful for quick readings. Starting from the left, lay out four cards face up and side by side.

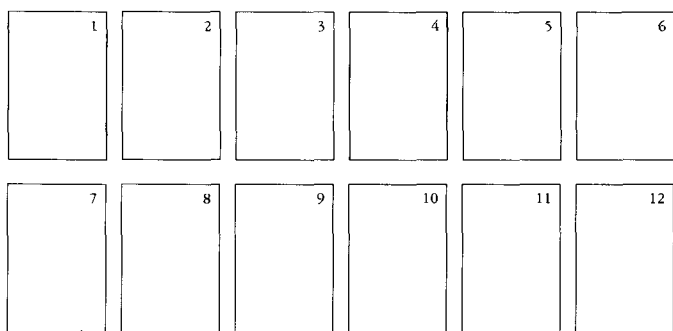


The *first* card describes the overall theme of the spread. The situation at the present, the circumstances of the questioner; The *second* card shows influences, either people or ideas, that affect the questioner; The *third* card indicates the questioner's outward face, the way in which he or she interacts and influences the situation; The *fourth* card points towards a solution, action that will overcome the problem or difficulty (should one exist). A negative card here could show the passing of a negative situation or way of thinking.

THE ASTROLOGICAL SPREAD

The twelve cards of the Astrological Spread represent the twelve astrological houses. Each card is interpreted in the context of the house in which it falls. A guide to the traditional attributes is given below. Additional information may be found in any of the better books on astrology.

The cards may be dealt in a circle as in an astrological chart. As space is usually limited, two rows of six is perhaps a more practical format.



- 1st House* The questioner, his physical body, personality, outlook, interests and hobbies. Court cards indicate self assertion or people who may affect the reading.
- 2nd House* Finance, monetary matters, personal possessions of all kinds and the subject's attitude towards them, worldly resources.
- 3rd House* Brothers, sisters and cousins, family ties in general, private thoughts, education and studies, communication and speech, neighbours, short journeys, public transport.
- 4th House* The home and frequented buildings, land, the immediate environment, the mother figure.
- 5th House* Children, amusements, romance, games and play, pleasures and entertainment, holidays, creativity, love affairs.
- 6th House* Work and health, hospitals, the working environment, business colleagues, household pets.
- 7th House* Close relationships, partnerships, marriage, known enemies, competitors, legal matters.
- 8th House* Endings, loans and debts, gifts and bequests, insurance investments and mortgages, other people's money, crime.

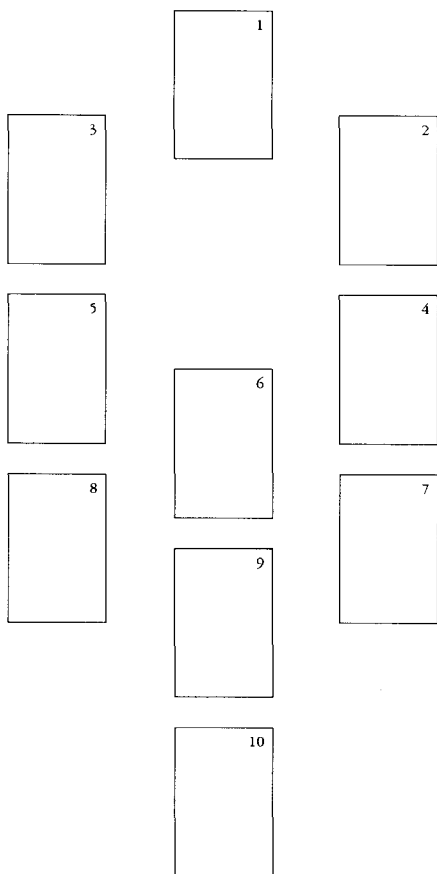
- 9th House* Law, religion, mysticism, self-realization, education, intellect, teaching and lecturing, advertising, long journeys, foreign travel and language, foreigners, moral ideas, conscience, dreams.
- 10th House* Superiors, reputation, status, career and business, aspirations, ambitions, responsibilities, the questioner's outward appearance, the father figure.
- 11th House* Friends, societies, hopes and wishes, intellectual pursuits and pleasures.
- 12th House* The inner self, the psyche, the need for seclusion, escapism, self-sacrifice, institutions and charities, restrictions, disappointments.

THE CABBALISTIC SPREAD

The Cabbalistic, Tree of Life or Sephiroth Spread provides a comprehensive view of the subject's circumstances and personality. It may be used in conjunction with other spreads, as it gives useful background information that may not be available elsewhere. Whilst it is helpful if the reader has some understanding of the cabbala and its symbolism, it is not essential. Experience of the cabbala will, however, extend the range of uses to which this reading may be put.

The cards are laid out in the positions of the spheres (sephiroth) on the Tree of Life. Start with the first sphere at the top of the tree and follow the numbers (the lightning flash), down to the bottom. The cards are then interpreted in the context of these positions. Each of the spheres deals with a specific area of the subject's life. For example, if the card Justice fell in the fourth position, that of Chesed, a strong sense of what is right will be indicated. The Devil appearing here suggests someone who would have no worries in attempting to pervert the course of justice in his favour, seeing the law as a tool to be used to his advantage and happy lying and distorting the truth to his own ends.

Outlines of the areas covered by each of the sephiroth are listed opposite and overleaf, along with their names:



- 1 *Kether* Inner spirituality and spiritual development, the higher self, conception of ideas, new beginnings.
- 2 *Chokmah* Personality, the realisation of ideas, the father figure and male activities and interests.
- 3 *Binah* Sorrows, the mother figure, female activities and influences.

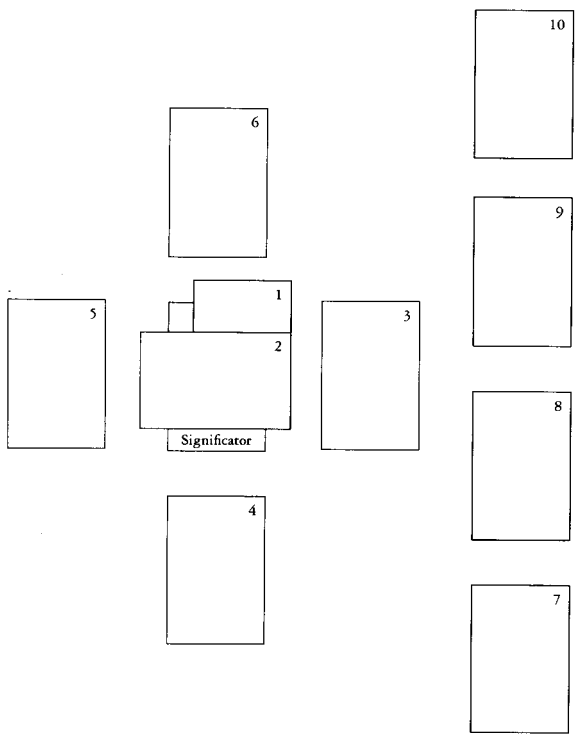
- | | | |
|----|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | <i>Chesed</i> | Law, justice and finance, ideals, planning, compassion. |
| 5 | <i>Geburah</i> | Action, strength, enemies and strife. |
| 6 | <i>Tiphareth</i> | Glory and fame, balance and harmony. |
| 7 | <i>Netsach</i> | Love and romance, the emotions, artistic abilities. |
| 8 | <i>Hod</i> | Trade and communications, language, speech and logic. |
| 9 | <i>Yesod</i> | Health, mental and physical, the imagination, sexual needs and urges. |
| 10 | <i>Malkuth</i> | The home and environment, the present, worldly possessions and money. |

THE CELTIC CROSS

This spread is included here as it is one of the most popular in use today. Anyone familiar with Tarot will have come across this spread. Its name relates to its likeness to a celtic cross (the shaft is at the side for convenience) rather than any association with the former inhabitants of Europe. Some readers, perhaps relying more on their personal psychic skills than the cards themselves, choose to use this spread with only the Major Arcana. The novice may find this idea attractive, but it should be pointed out that in doing so, the scope and depth of the reading will be severely restricted. This is a comparatively simple spread for the beginner – the more you use it, the more you will get out of it. The precise details of the spread may differ slightly from reader to reader but essentially they are all the same.

. Start by choosing a significator (see page 65) to represent the subject and place this in the centre of the table. Deal ten cards, from the top of the shuffled and cut deck, in the order indicated by the numbers on the diagram.

- 0 Significator – the subject.
- 1 *Present situation* – the circumstances of the questioner at the time of the reading. It may indicate a state of mind, or the physical situation relating to the subject.
- 2 *Immediate influences* – close to hand. These may be of a positive and helpful nature, or they could be holding the subject back



subject back in some way. Obstacles and opposition or the absence of them. There could be an indication of personal excess.

- 3 *Near future* – plans and intentions. These may not however, comply with the final outcome shown in card number 10. This card could also indicate events occurring in the short term as a result of the subjects immediate actions.
- 4 *Distant past, foundations* – people or events which have given rise to the present situation. The inquirer's previous actions or thoughts which are having an effect on the present. These may or may not be known to the subject.
- 5 *Recent past* – this may be any time prior to the consultation. However close the subject may consider this influence to be, it is now firmly in the past and its power is fading.
- 6 *Goals, aims and ideals*. These are determined by an understanding of the situation, and so are open to change following the information provided by the consultation.
- 7 *The subject's effect on the environment* – the immediate surroundings, people and events. It may be real or imagined. The card describes the limits of control over circumstances.
- 8 *Environmental influences* – either people or events, on the subject. Perhaps the attitudes or reactions of others to the present situation. These influences may be helpful or not. It may also indicate how the subject is perceived by the world, and this could be at odds with the image presented in the previous card.
- 9 *Attitudes, feelings and emotions* – about the present or the future are suggested here. Concerns and emotions regarding the matters covered by the spread.
- 10 *The final result*. This card indicates the most likely future outcome when viewed from the present.

APPENDICES

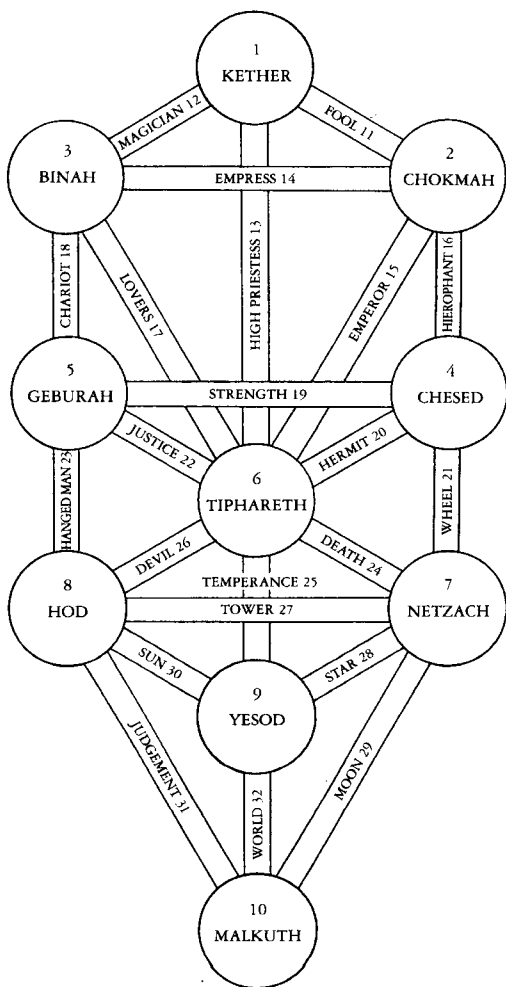
These appendices contain tables and charts relevant to the Ancient Egyptian Tarot that would not fit comfortably within the text. They provide additional information or summarise that given elsewhere in a more convenient form. The cabbalistic attributions follow the system of correspondences used by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

CABBALA ATTRIBUTIONS

No.	Name	Letter	Meaning	Astrological
0	Aleph	A	Ox	Air
1	Beth	B	House	Mercury
2	Gimel	G	Camel	Moon
3	Daleth	D	Door	Venus
4	He	H	Window	Aries
5	Vau	V	Nail	Taurus
6	Zain	Z	Sword	Gemini
7	Cheth	CH	Fence	Cancer
8	Teth	T	Serpent	Leo
9	Yod	I	Hand	Virgo
10	Kaph	K	Palm	Jupiter
11	Lamed	L	Ox goad	Libra
12	Mem	M	Water	Water
13	Nun	N	Fish	Scorpio
14	Samekh	S	Prop	Sagittarius
15	A'ain	O	Eye	Capricorn
16	Pe	P	Mouth	Mars
17	Tzadi	TZ	Fish hook	Aquarius
18	Qoph	Q	Back of head	Pisces
19	Resh	R	Head	Sun
20	Shin	SH	Tooth	Fire
21	Tau	T	Tau cross	Saturn

Colour	Titles
Pale yellow	Spirit of Aether
Yellow	Magus of Power
Blue	Priestess of the Silver Star
Emerald	Daughter of the Mighty Ones
Scarlet	Sun of the Morning; Chief Among the Mighty
Red orange	Magus of the Eternal
Orange	Children of the Voice; Oracles of the Mighty Gods
Amber	Child of the Powers of Water; Lord of the Triumphant Light
Yellow	Daughter of the Flaming Sword
Green	Magus of the Voice of Power; Prophet of the Eternal
Violet	Lord of the Forces of Life
Emerald	Daughter of the Lords of Truth; Ruler of the Balance
Deep blue	Spirit of the Mighty Waters
Green blue	Child of the Great Transformers; Lord of the Gates of Death
Blue	Daughter of the Reconcilers; The Bringer Forth of Life
Indigo	Lord of the Gates of Matter; Child of the Forces of Time
Scarlet	Lord of the Hosts of the Mighty
Violet	Daughter of the Firmament; Dweller between the Waters
Crimson	Ruler of Flux and Reflux; Child of the Sons of the Mighty
Orange	Lord of the Fire of the World
Orange scarlet	Spirit of the Primal Fire
Indigo	Great One of the Night of Time

THE TREE OF LIFE



THE MAJOR ARCANA AND THE OSIRIAN RESURRECTION

No.	Card	The Osirian resurrection
0	Fool	Amun, creator god, sea of Nuit
1	Magician	Thoth, the voice of Creation
2	Priestess	Isis, the sister and wife of Osiris
3	Empress	Hathor, a second aspect of Isis
4	Emperor	Amun-Ra, the first lord of mankind
5	Hierophant	Osiris, the second lord of mankind
6	Lovers	Tefnut and Shu, Geb and Nuit
7	Chariot	Horus, the child of Osiris and Isis
8	Strength	Sekhmet, the avenger, passions controlled
9	Hermit	Journey to the East, civilization
10	Wheel of Fortune	Knumn, creator of mankind, hand of fate
11	Justice	Maat, the just reign of Osiris
12	Hanged Man	Osiris, surrender leads to progress
13	Death	Anubis and the sarcophagus of Osiris
14	Temperance	Nephthys, the aid of Isis in her search
15	Devil	Set and Apophis, mankind enslaved
16	Tower	Destruction of the works of Osiris
17	Star	Isis searching for Osiris
18	Moon	The gates of the Underworld
19	Sun	Birth of Horus, restoration of rule
20	Judgement	Resurrection of Osiris
21	World	Dance of Nuit, the universal harmony

THE MINOR ARCANA AND ASTROLOGY

Wands – Fire – South – Lion

No.	Planet	Sign	Colour	Title
2	Mars	Aries	Blue	Dominion
3	Sun	Aries	Crimson	Virtue
4	Venus	Aries	Violet	Completion
5	Saturn	Leo	Orange	Strife
6	Jupiter	Leo	Pink	Victory
7	Mars	Leo	Amber	Valour
8	Mercury	Sagittarius	Violet	Swiftness
9	Moon	Sagittarius	Indigo	Strength
10	Saturn	Sagittarius	Yellow	Oppression

Cups – Water – West – Eagle

No.	Planet	Sign	Colour	Title
2	Venus	Cancer	Grey	Love
3	Mercury	Cancer	Black	Abundance
4	Moon	Cancer	Blue	Luxury
5	Mars	Scorpio	Scarlet	Disappointment
6	Sun	Scorpio	Yellow	Pleasure
7	Venus	Scorpio	Emerald	Debauchery
8	Saturn	Pisces	Orange	Indolence
9	Jupiter	Pisces	Violet	Happiness
10	Mars	Pisces	Citrine, Olive, Russet, Black	Satiety

Swords – Air – East – Human

No.	Planet	Sign	Colour	Title
2	Moon	Libra	Pearl	Peace
3	Saturn	Libra	Brown	Sorrow
4	Jupiter	Libra	Purple	Truce
5	Venus	Aquarius	Scarlet	Defeat
6	Mercury	Aquarius	Salmon	Science
7	Moon	Aquarius	Yellow	Futility
8	Jupiter	Gemini	Russet	Interference
9	Mars	Gemini	Purple	Cruelty
10	Sun	Gemini	Citrine, Olive, Russet, Black with Gold	Ruin

Disks – Earth – North – Ox

No.	Planet	Sign	Colour	Title
2	Jupiter	Capricorn	White, Blue, Red, Yellow	Change
3	Mars	Capricorn	Grey, Pink	Work
4	Sun	Capricorn	Azure, Yellow	Power
5	Mercury	Taurus	Red, Black	Worry
6	Moon	Taurus	Gold	Success
7	Saturn	Taurus	Olive, Gold	Failure
8	Sun	Virgo	Ochre, Gold	Prudence
9	Venus	Virgo	Citrine, Azure	Gain
10	Mercury	Virgo	Black, Yellow	Wealth

THE GEOMETRY OF THE CARDS

The format of the cards of the Ancient Egyptian Tarot follows the principles of sacred geometry. Recognized by the Egyptian priests, Sacred Geometry is based upon proportional relationships occurring in the natural world. The Golden Proportion is evident in the spiral structure of a snail's shell and the form of a flower. It played a strong role in the planning of important buildings such as temples and pyramids, and has continued to influence art and architecture through the centuries. The basic principles may be seen in many places, from the plans and façades of the gothic cathedrals of Europe to the paintings of the masters.

Here Sacred Geometry is established in the dimensions of the cards. The overall size of each card is in the proportion of 2:3, i.e. the longer side is $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the length of the shorter.

The outside of the border corresponds to the Golden Proportion; the longer side is approximately 1.618 times that of the shorter. If a line is drawn across this area to form a square, the remaining rectangle will also be of the same proportions, 1:1.618. If a square is made in this second rectangle the same properties will be present. However many times this is done the proportions will always remain the same.

The inside of the border of the Major Arcana cards is in the proportion of 1 to 1.414; this number represents the square root of two, and the diagonal is equal to the square root of three.

HIEROGLYPHS

The word hieroglyph means 'holy picture symbol' (more literally 'holy carving'). They were used by the priests and scribes to write religious texts. Another form of writing known as hieratic was used for secular inscriptions.

The hieroglyphs on the border of the cards is made up of passages taken from *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*. This title is a modern invention – to the Egyptians, the sacred writings were known as 'The Book of Coming Forth by Day'.

Of the excerpts used, the first is from the chapter entitled 'Entering the Hall of Ma'at'. The second is the Speech of Thoth from the texts relating to the Weighing of the Heart. The final piece is a general phrase relating to the Ancient Egyptians' belief in eternal life. The texts run around the card in the following order:

I have come unto thee. I have drawn nigh to see thy beauties. My hands are raised in adoration of thy name of Ma'at (i.e. truth). I have drawn unto the place where the cedar tree existeth not, where the acacia tree doth not put forth shoots, and where the ground produces neither grass nor herbs. Now I have entered into the hidden place, and I speak with Set. My protector came to me, his face was masked, and he looked on the hidden things (mysteries).

Thoth, the judge of right and truth of the Great Company of the Gods who are in the presence of Osiris, saith: Hear ye this judgement.

Live life, not shalt thou die.

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INDEX OF CARDS

Minor references are indicated by *italics*

- Major Arcana
- Fool 6, 13, 18
 - Magician 13, 20
 - High Priestess 13, 22, 28, 32, 53
 - Empress 13, 24, 32
 - Emperor 13, 26
 - Hierophant 13, 28, 58, 61
 - Lovers 13, 30
 - Chariot 13, 32
 - Strength 14, 34
 - Hermit 14, 36
 - Wheel of Fortune 14, 38, 40, 61
 - Justice 14, 40, 128
 - Hanged Man 14, 42, 46, 60
 - Death 14, 44
 - Temperance 14, 46
 - Devil 14, 35, 48, 128
 - Tower 14, 50
 - Star 14, 52
 - Moon 14, 54, 56
 - Sun 14, 56
 - Judgement 6, 58
 - World 6, 60
- Wands
- Ace 66
 - Two 67
 - Three 68
 - Four 69
 - Five 70
 - Six 71
 - Seven 72
 - Eight 73
 - Nine 74
 - Ten 75
 - Princess 76
 - Prince 77
 - Queen 78
 - King 79
- Cups
- Ace 80
 - Two 81
 - Three 82
 - Four 83
 - Five 84
 - Six 85
 - Seven 86
 - Eight 87
 - Nine 88
 - Ten 89
 - Princess 90
 - Prince 91
 - Queen 92
 - King 93
- Swords
- Ace 94
 - Two 95
 - Three 96
 - Four 97
 - Five 98
 - Six 99
 - Seven 100
 - Eight 101
 - Nine 102
 - Ten 103
 - Princess 104
 - Prince 105
 - Queen 106
 - King 107
- Disks
- Ace 108
 - Two 5, 109
 - Three 110
 - Four 111
 - Five 112
 - Six 113
 - Seven 114
 - Eight 115
 - Nine 116
 - Ten 117
 - Princess 118
 - Prince 119
 - Queen 120
 - King 121

GENERAL INDEX

- Ankh 59
Abundance 82
Abyss 37
Africa 4, 16
Air 18, 63, 65, 119
Aleph 18
Alexandria 5, 16
Alliette *see* Etteilla
Alphabet, Hebrew 8
Animals
 ape 36, 45
 bull 119
 butterfly 19
 cat 17, 24, 85, 120
 crab 83
 crayfish 92
 crocodile 19
 dog 19
 dolphin 90
 eagle 91
 falcon 45
 fish 55, 61, 87
 goose 17, 120
 hawk 47
 ibis 14, 52, 92
 jackal 45, 54
 leopard 78
 lion 34, 71, 77, 78
 lioness 72
 ram 26, 38, 118
 scarab 55
 scorpion 45
 serpent 21, 24, 31,
 34, 49, 51, 66
 swallow 17, 107
 swan 90
 tiger 76
 vulture 19, 106
Amenti (the
 Underworld) 14
Amun (Amun-Ra) 13,
 18, 19, 21, 30, 57,
 67
Annwn 15
Ankh 19, 20, 22, 25, 42,
 45, 59, 60, 82,
 105, 108, 111,
 119, 120
Anubis 16, 36, 39, 45,
 47, 54, 59
Annunciation of the
 Blessed Virgin 17
Apophis (Apep) 14, 35,
 49, 61
Apis 16, 29
Aquarius 52, 64, 98, 99,
 100
Arabs 4, 12
Ardhanari 3
Archetypes 8, 12
Aries 26, 64, 67, 68, 69
Arthur, King 14
Arthurian romances 12
Asar *see* Osiris
Aset *see* Isis
Asgard 15
Astrological Spread 126
Autumn Equinox 17
Avalon 16
Ayin 48
Ba 45, 59
Bag 19
Balder 15
Bakhau 53
Bast 24, 85
Beard 26
Bebry 59
Belgium 4
bes 109
Beth 20
Bohemians, *see* Gypsies
Book of the Dead, Egyptian
 140
Book of Coming Forth
 by Day 140
Book of Thoth (Crowley) 7
Bringer Forth of Life 46
Britain 16
Builders of the Adytum
 (BOTA) Tarot
 (Case) 7

- Cabbala 6, 17
 Cabalistic Spread 128
 Caduceus 49, *see also*
 Wand
 Caligula 16
 Cancer 32, 64, 81, 82,
 83
 Canopic Jars 45
 Capricorn 48, 64, 109,
 110, 111
 Case, Paul Foster 7, 25
 Celtic Cross Spread 130
 Clubs 2
 Change 109
 Cherh 32
 Chief Among the Mighty
 26
 Child of the Forces of
 Time 48
 Child of the Great
 Transformers 44
 Child of the Power of
 Water 32
 Child of the Sons of the
 Mighty 54
 Children of the Voice 30
 Children 56, 84, 106
 Choleric 62
 Christ 42
 Coffin 55
 Collective
 unconsciousness 11
 Colour
 amber 32
 black 33, 59
 blue 22, 29, 39, 41,
 42, 46, 59, 60, 116
 crimson 54
 emerald green 24, 40
 gold 29, 39, 47, 51,
 103
 green 33, 37, 44, 51,
 57, 108
 orange 28, 30, 56, 58
 purple 31, 41
 red 23, 28, 29, 33, 48,
 60, 77, 79, 83
 scarlet 26, 50, 58
 silver 33, 47, 52
 violet 38, 52
 white 29
 yellow 18, 20, 34, 36,
 39, 41
 Combinations of Cards
 124
 Completion 69
 Constant, Alphonse
 Louis, *see* Levi
 Copper 81
 Cosmic egg 18, 61
 Covelluzzo 4
 Crook 58
 Crowley, Aleister 7
 Cruelty 102
 Cups 62
 Czechoslovakia 4
 Daleth 24
 Daughter of the Flaming
 Sword 34
 Daughter of the
 Firmament 52
 Daughter of the Lords of
 Time 40
 Daughter of the Mighty
 Ones 24
 Daughter of the
 Reconcilers 46
 Debauchery 86
 Defeat 98
 Demotic 5
 Deshret crown 94
 Diamonds 2
 Dionysus 29
 Disappointment 84
 Disks 62
 Djed 19, 29, 51
 Dominion 67
 Domitian 16
 Door 25, 51, 53, 100,
 115
 Dreaming 124
 Duamutef 45
 Dweller between the
 Waters 52
 Earth 46, 60, 63, 65,
 108, 119
 Eden 30
 Elements 9, 20, 61, 62,
 125
 Eleusis 16
 Emotions 62
 Encauss, Dr Gerard *see*
 Papus
 England 6
 Etteilla 6
 Europe 16
 Eye 14, 29, 33, 49, 50;
 79
 Failure 114
 Feather 19, 31, 41, 59
 Fire 58, 62, 65
 Fire snake 61
 Flail 28, 56
 Four Card Spread 126
 France 4, 6, 16
 Futility 100
 Gain 116
 Geb 18, 30, 60
 Gebelin, Antione Court
 De 5
 Gemini 30, 47, 64, 101,
 102, 103
 Geometry of the Card
 140
 Germany 16
 Gimel 22
 Gnosis 23

- Golden Dawn, Hemitic Order of the 6, 133
- Golden Proportion 140
- Graal hallows 4
- Great One of the Night of Time 60
- Greek 5, 12, 14, 16
- Gypsies 3, 6
- Hall of Judgement 45, 47
- Hanuman 3
- Hapi 43, 45, 80
- Happiness 88
- Harpocrates 16, 18, 39
- Harris, Lady Frieda 7
- Hathor 13, 24
- He 26
- Health 62
- Hearts 2
- Heaven 29, 43
- Hedjet 28
- Hermanubis 39
- Hermes 16, 21, 39
- Hieroglyphs 5, 20, 29, 43, 53, 76, 79, 100, 105, 108, 140
- Hill 25, *see also* mound
- Hindu mythology 3, 61
- Holland 16
- Horus 14, 18, 24, 25, 28, 31, 32, 45, 49, 50, 57
- Ichthus 61
- Imset 45
- Indian playing cards 4
- Indigo 48
- Indolance 87
- Interference 101
- Iseum 16
- Isis 13, 14, 16, 17, 22, 24, 28, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 51, 52, 90
- Italy 4
- Jesus 17
- Joker 4
- Judaism 17
- Jung, C.G. 8, 11
- Jupiter 38, 71, 88, 97, 101, 109, 117
- Ka 59
- Kaph 38
- Kether 60
- Khu 59
- Khnumn 14, 38
- Khonsu 55
- King of the Hosts of the Sea 93
- King of the Spirits of Air 107
- King of the Spirits of Earth 121
- King of the Spirits of Fire 79
- Koran 17
- Lady of the Flame 34
- Lake of Fire 59
- Lady of the Stars 60
- Lamed 40
- Latin 12
- Le Monde Primitiff Analyse et Compare avec le Monde Moderne* (Gebelín) 5
- Leo 34, 64, 70, 71, 72
- Levi, Eliphas 6
- Libra 40, 64, 95, 96, 97, 106
- Lightning 50
- Lightning flash 128
- Loki 15
- Lord of the Flame and the Lightning 79
- Lord of the Fire of the World 56
- Lord of the Forces of Life 38
- Lord of the Forces of Matter 48
- Lord of the Gates of Death 44
- Lord of the Hosts of the Mighty 50
- Lord of the Triumph of Life 32
- Lord of the Waves and the Waters 93
- Lord of the Wide and Fertile Earth 121
- Lord of the Winds and the Breezes 107
- Lord of the Wine 47
- Love 81
- Lower Egypt 21, 61, 94
- Lucifer 51
- Luxury 83
- Ma'at 19, 31, 40, 45, 49, 59, 140, 141
- Magical arts 12
- Magus of Power 20
- Magus of the Eternal 28
- Magus of the Voice of Power 36
- Marjor Arcana 2, 4, 6, 11
- Mahatmas of Tibet 3
- Malachite 24
- Malkuth 60
- Malory, Sir Thomas 12
- Mandorla 61
- Manjet 43
- Manu 53
- Margawse 16
- Mars 26, 41, 45, 50, 67, 72, 84, 102, 110
- Mask 26, 40
- Melancholic 62

- Mem 42
 Memory Test A 122, B 123
 Memphis 29
 Merlin 15
 Mercury 16, 20, 21, 31, 36, 49, 73, 82, 99, 112
 Milky Way 53
 Mind 62
 Minor Arcana 2, 62
 Money 62
 Monolith *see* obelisk
 Moon 20, 22, 31, 33, 49, 54, 56, 74, 83, 95, 100, 113
 Mordred 15
Mort D'Arthur (Malory) 12
 Mound 18, 57, 77, 119
 Mouth 50
 Mut 19

 Naipes 4
 Necropolis 44
 Neit 45
 Nekhebet 28, 47, 106
 Nephthys 14, 31, 44, 45, 47
 Netherworld *see* Underworld
 Nile 15, 42, 43, 52, 55, 80, 81, 83, 85, 88, 93
 Norse myths 15
 North Africa *see* Africa
 Nuit 13, 14, 18, 30, 53, 61
 Nun (letter) 44
 Nun 18, 43

 Obelisk 49, 50, 79, 82
 Odin 15
 Ogdoad 20

 Oppression 75
 Oracle of the Mighty Gods 30
 Orion 53
 Osirian Resurrection 13
 Osiris 13, 14, 17, 22, 24, 28, 31, 33, 37, 42, 45, 47, 48, 53, 55, 57, 58, 80, 141
 Our Lady of the Stars 53

 Papus 6
 Paradise 17
 Pe 50
 Peace 95
 Peseshkef 45, 59
 Personal unconsciousness 11
 phlegmatic 62
 planets 9
 Plants
 laurel 95
 lotus 18, 21, 25, 31, 43, 61, 71, 90, 91, 92, 104
 papyrus 21, 23, 73, 80
 pomegranate 22, 36, 82
 wheat 36, 114, 121
 Playing cards 4
 Pleasure 85
 Pisces 54, 64, 87, 88, 89
 Pompeii 16
 Power 111
 Priestess of the Silver Star 22
 Prince of the Chariot of Earth 119
 Prince of the Chariot of Fire 77
 Prince of the Chariot of the Winds 105
 Prince of the Chariot of Water 91

 Princess of the Echoing Hills 118
 Princess of the Rushing Winds 104
 Princess of the Shining Flame 76
 Princess of the Waters 90
 Printing 5
 Prophet of the Eternal 36
 Prudence 115
 Psychopompos 16
 Ptolomies, the 16
 Pylon *see* door
 Pyramid 20, 51, 53, 61, 74, 82, 88, 110, 113
 Pyramidion *see* obelisk

 Qabalah *see* cabbala
 Queen of the Thrones of Air 106
 Queen of the Thrones of Flame 78
 Queen of the Thrones of Earth 120
 Queen of the Thrones of Water 92
 Qoph 54, 57

 Ra 25, 33, 34, 57, *see also* Amun-Ra
 Race Memory 11
 Rainbow 46, 56, 61
 Recording Spreads 123
 Red God 48
 Renaissance 12
 Resh 56
 Reversed Cards 124
Rider-Waite Tarot (Waite and Smith) vii, 7
 Roman 12
 Rome 16
 Root of the Powers of Air 94

- Root of the Powers of Earth 108
 Root of the Powers of Fire 66
 Root of the Powers of the Waters 80
 Rose of the Palace of Earth 118
 Rose of the Palace of Flame 76
 Rosetta 5
 Ruler of Flux and Reflux 54
 Ruler of the Balance 40
 Ruin 103
 Sacred Geometry 140
 Sagittarius 46, 64, 73, 74, 75
 Saint Peter 43
 Samek 46
 Sanguine 62
 Saronic Cycle 55
 Satiety 89
 Saturn 60, 70, 75, 87, 96, 114
 Science 99
 Scorpio 44, 64, 84, 85, 86
 Sekhmet 24, 34
 Self Readings 126
 Sepdet *see* Sothis
Sepher Yetzirah – The Book of Formation (Anon) 7
 Sephirah (Sephiroth) 8
 Sephiroth Spread 128
 Serapis 16, 29
 Set 14, 16, 19, 29, 31, 33, 39, 44, 48, 50, 57, 141
 Shin 58
 Shu 18, 30, 94
 Significator 65
 Sirius 19, 53
 Smith, Pamela Coleman 7
 Solar disk 20, 26, 66, 78
 Sorrow 96
 Sothis 19, 53
 Spades 2
 Spain 3, 4, 12, 16
 Sphinx 33, 39, 74
 Spirit of the Aether 18
 Spirit of the Mighty Waters 42
 Spirit of the Primal Fire 58
 Spreads 122
 Spring Equinox 17
 Star 49, 61
 Strength 74
 Strife 70
 Success 113
 Sun 16, 21, 26, 33, 53, 55, 56, 68, 85, 87, 103, 111, 115
 heliacal rising 53
 Sun of the Morning 26
 Swiftmess 73
 Sword 31, 62, 63
 Switzerland 4
 Tarocco (Tarocchi) 4
Tarot of the Bohemians (Papus) 6
 Tarot Note Book 122
 Taurus 28, 64, 112, 113, 114
 Tefnut 18, 30
 Tet 44
 Teth 34
 Theosophical Society 6
 Thoth 13, 14, 30, 36, 49, 52, 59, 140, 141
Thoth Tarot (Crowley) 7
 Throne 14, 23, 26, 49, 120
 Tibet 3
 Tiphereth 57, 60
 Tree of Life 8, 22, 31, 57, 64, 128
 Truce 97
 Typhon, Typhonians 39, 49
 Tzaddi 52
 Underworld 28, 35, 37, 50, 53, 59
 Upper Egypt 21, 28
 Uraeus 28, 35, 47, 66 78
 Uther 15
 Valour 72
 Vau 28
 Venus 24, 41, 69, 81, 86, 98, 116
 Victory 71
 Viking funeral 16
 Virgin Mary 17, 22
 Virgo 36, 64, 115, 116, 117
 Virtue 68
 Visconti family 4
 Waas sceptre 19, 31, 58, 77, 78, 79
 Wand 19, 21, 31, 62
 Waite, Arthur E. 7
 Water 42, 46, 62, 63, 65
 Wealth 117
 Weighing of the Heart 41, 45, 140
 Will-o-the-wisp 37
 Winter Solstice 17
 Wings 19, 46, 58, 66, 78, 79, 106
 Wirth, Oswald 6
 Wisdom of the Ages 11
 Work 110

Yod 36
York 16
Yugoslavia 4

Zain 31
Zeus 29
Zodiac 9, 57